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Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2017/9. It assesses progress in the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and in mainstreaming gender in the operational activities of the United Nations development system.

It draws on information from United Nations entities reporting under the System-wide Action Plan, the strategic summaries of coordination results of the United Nations Development Group, the information management system of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group Office and secondary sources. Recommendations are offered for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 2018 on ways to support integrated and accelerated joint action on gender mainstreaming in the policies and programmes of the United Nations system within the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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I. Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2017/9, requested that I submit a report to the Council at its 2018 session on the implementation of the resolution, including on progress made in the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The present report responds to that request.

2. Section II of the present report highlights intergovernmental and system-wide advances on gender equality and the empowerment of women in 2017; section III reports on progress on the implementation of the System-wide Action Plan, including lessons learned; section IV examines progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective into operational activities; section V highlights gaps and challenges; and section VI concludes with recommendations for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council.

3. The present report analysed data provided by 66 United Nations entities reporting under the System-wide Action Plan, the United Nations Development Group's strategic summaries of coordination results for 2017 and 2018 for 131 United Nations country teams and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group Office information management system.[1] It also reviewed relevant secondary sources.

II. Advancing the gender equality agenda

4. As Secretary-General, I have taken several steps to further strengthen the infrastructure of the United Nations system to better deliver on gender equality and the empowerment of women. I have requested deeper expert analysis of how United Nations instruments, in particular budget planning and results management, can better support gender mainstreaming efforts. I am establishing a high-level task force on financing for gender equality and women's empowerment to tackle the issue of financing for gender equality within the United Nations system. In addition, I have called on all the heads of entities to serve as gender champions by making tangible commitments. Recognizing gender parity as an urgent priority, I launched my system-wide strategy on gender parity in September 2017, with the goal of achieving parity at senior levels of leadership by 2021, and ultimately across the system, at all levels by 2028. To ensure zero tolerance for sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, I have created mechanisms to address those grave complaints.

5. In 2017, intergovernmental bodies, including the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, continued to provide normative guidance on gender mainstreaming, gender equality and the empowerment of women. The agreed conclusions of the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women led to new commitments for eliminating barriers to women's empowerment in the changing world of work, including through implementing conducive economic and social policies, addressing the growing informality of women's work and mobility and managing technological and digital change and enhancing the role of the private sector for women's economic empowerment.

6. During the high-level political forum on sustainable development, participating countries highlighted specific measures to integrate gender equality perspectives into

[1] Information provided in the United Nations Development Group's strategic summaries of coordination results for 2017 and 2018 reflect the progress and outcomes of the activities/interventions of 131 United Nations country teams in 2016 and 2017. An analysis of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group Office's information management system data for 2018 was not included as it had not been validated at the time of writing.

policymaking, including gender-responsive budgeting. The resulting ministerial declaration (E/HLS/2017/1) gave added emphasis to Sustainable Development Goal 5 as a catalyst of progress for the achievement of all the Goals and targets, especially the mutually reinforcing linkages between the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the eradication of poverty.

7. In 2017, in its resolution 72/234, the General Assembly called upon the entities of the United Nations system to mainstream a gender perspective and to pursue gender equality in country programmes, planning instruments, investment frameworks and sector-wide programmes and in accordance with national development strategies.

8. During the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification gender action plans were adopted for the first time. The gender action plan of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change provides a clear road map for Member States to advance women's full, equal and meaningful participation as a precondition and solution for gender-responsive climate action. The gender action plan of the Convention to Combat Desertification supports gender mainstreaming in the implementation of its 2018–2030 Strategic Framework.

9. The Spotlight Initiative, a global, multi-year, €500 million investment spearheaded by the European Union and the United Nations, places the elimination of violence against women at the centre of efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and as a key driver of progress across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As a model for Sustainable Development Goal funds, the Initiative reflects an innovative approach for catalysing an enhanced, joint United Nations response to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

III. Promoting system-wide accountability for gender mainstreaming in the entities of the United Nations system

10. In 2017, 66 entities (94 per cent of United Nations entities, corresponding to over 99 per cent of the United Nations budget) reported under the System-wide Action Plan, including the Secretariat and its departments and offices.[2] Participation and reporting on the System-wide Action Plan has steadily increased from a baseline of 55 entities in 2012, reflecting the acceptance of the System-wide Action Plan as an effective system-wide accountability mechanism.

11. 2017 constituted the final year of reporting under the first phase of implementation of the System-wide Action Plan. Since its introduction in 2012, the System-wide Action Plan has facilitated significant and sustained improvement in the Organization's performance with regard to mainstreaming gender equality. The percentage of ratings meeting or exceeding requirements more than doubled from 2012 to 2017, from 31 to 65 per cent (see figure I). Gains can be attributed to system-wide ownership of the System-wide Action Plan, the leadership of senior management, coordination, networking, capacity development and facilitation by United Nations networks.

12. However, the United Nations system fell short of meeting all requirements by 36 percentage points. Persistent structural areas of weakness, related in particular to

[2] Non-reporting entities included the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

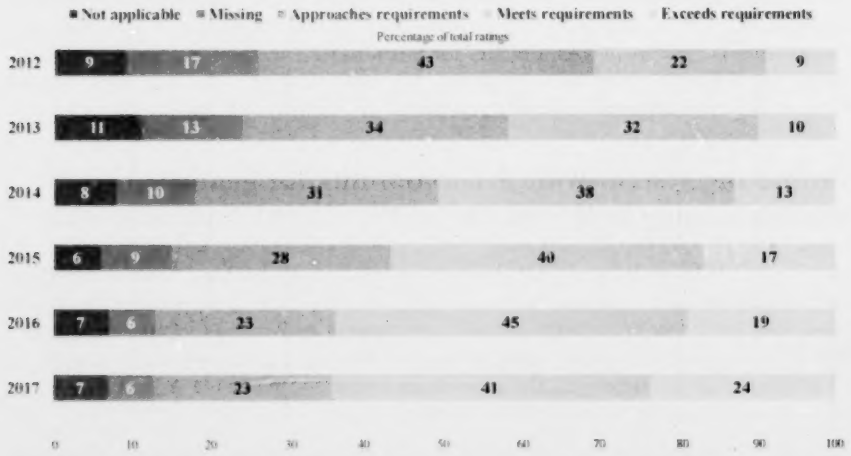
gender architecture [3] and parity, resource allocation and capacity assessment, prevented the United Nations system from advancing sufficiently, and requires increased attention from senior leadership.

13. Sustained commitment and a sharper focus are needed during the second phase of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (System-wide Action Plan 2.0), under which reporting will take place from 2019 onward. The updated System-wide Action Plan offers the United Nations a platform to fulfil its commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women, build on the considerable advances made and address areas of persistent weakness.

A. Comparative analysis of overall United Nations system performance, 2012–2017

14. To assess performance trends, the report compares results by year, performance indicator and type of entity[4] and highlights areas of strengths and improvement.

Figure I
Comparative analysis of overall ratings for the United Nations system, 2012–2017



Note: Calculations for the United Nations system are based on 990 individual ratings, derived from 66 entities reporting on 15 performance indicators.

15. Overall, system-wide performance in 2017 remained consistent with that of 2016, with 65 per cent of all ratings falling into the "meets requirements" or "exceeds requirements" category, up 1 percentage point from 2016.

16. Differentiating the "meets requirements" and "exceeds requirements" categories, however, reveals significant progress. In 2017, 24 per cent of all indicators fell in the "exceeds requirements" category, an increase of 5 percentage points over 2016 and 16 percentage points over 2012. Effective leadership and extensive

[3] See www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20work/unsystemcoordination/un-swap/un-swap-technical-notes.pdf?la=en.

[4] Entities were grouped into categories based on the standard United Nations organizational breakdown: funds and programmes, the Secretariat, specialized entities, technical entities and research and training institutes.

networking, coordination and inter-agency learning and support, involving inter-agency networks and staff from strategic planning, human resources and evaluation and auditing, among others, contributed to those system-wide advances.

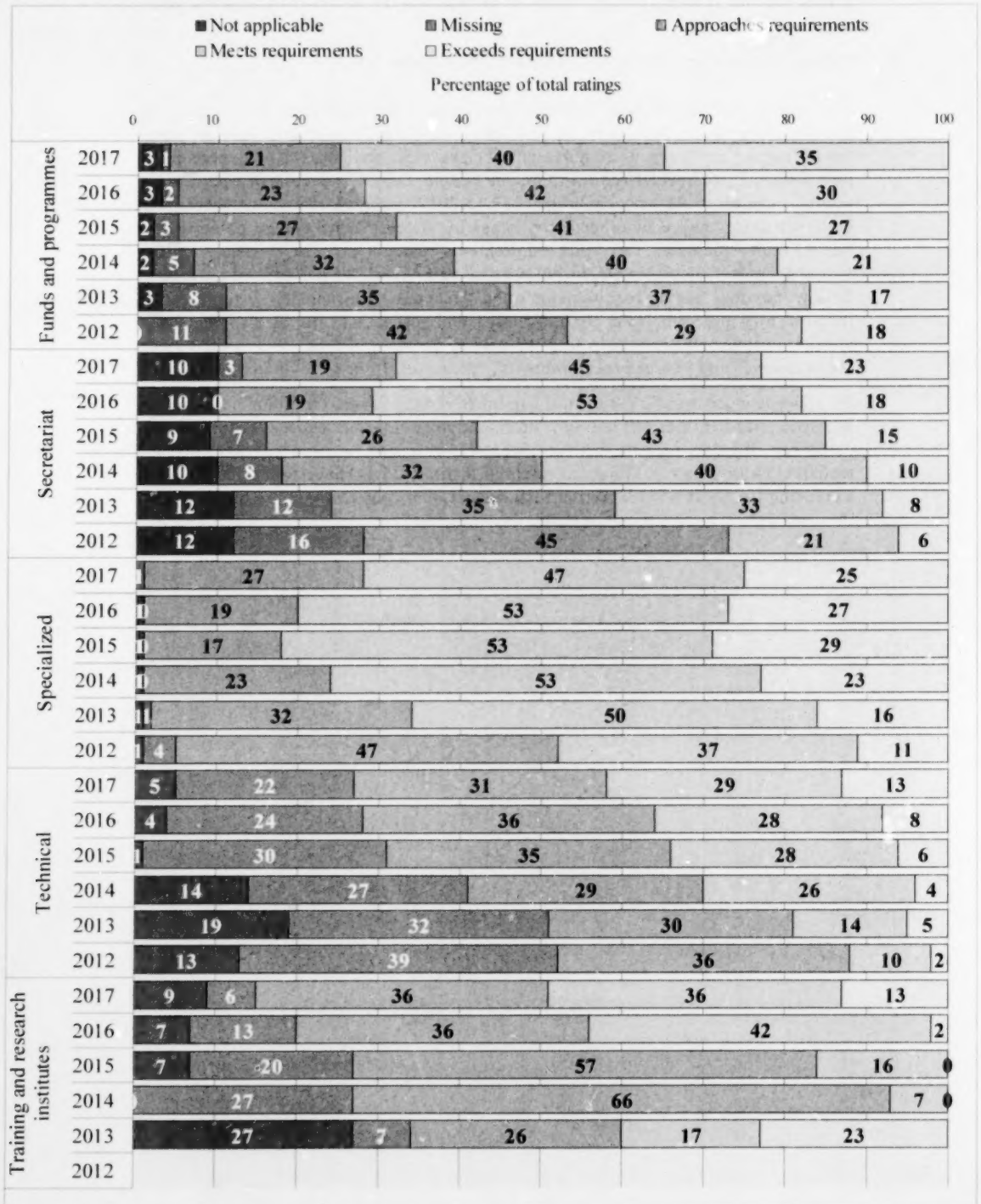
B. Comparative analysis, by clusters, of entity types

17. Funds and programmes collectively registered the highest performance of all entity clusters (see figure II). In 2017, 75 per cent of their ratings fell into the "meets requirements" or "exceeds requirements" categories, an increase of 3 percentage points since 2016. Specialized entities came second. Despite a decline of 8 percentage points, from 80 to 72 per cent from 2016 to 2017, the performance of specialized entities remains ahead of other entity types by at least 4 percentage points in the "meets requirements" or "exceeds requirements" categories.[5] The cluster of entities with a technical focus registered noteworthy gains, with 42 per cent of all ratings falling into the "meets requirements" and "exceeds requirements" categories: an increase of 6 per cent from 2016. Training and research institutes also registered steady improvement from 2016 to 2017 with an increase of 5 per cent in the "meets requirements" and "exceeds requirements" categories, from 44 to 49 per cent.

18. While more than 70 per cent of combined ratings for the funds and programmes and specialized entities fell into the "meets requirements" or "exceeds requirements" categories, the data suggest that significant effort is still required to ensure that the technical entities and training and research institutes, who have found meeting and exceeding the System-wide Action Plan requirements challenging, are on a par with the rest of the United Nations system.

[5] The decline is due to stronger adherence to performance requirements, particularly in cases of assigning an "exceeds requirements" rating.

Figure II
Comparative analysis of ratings, by year and entity type



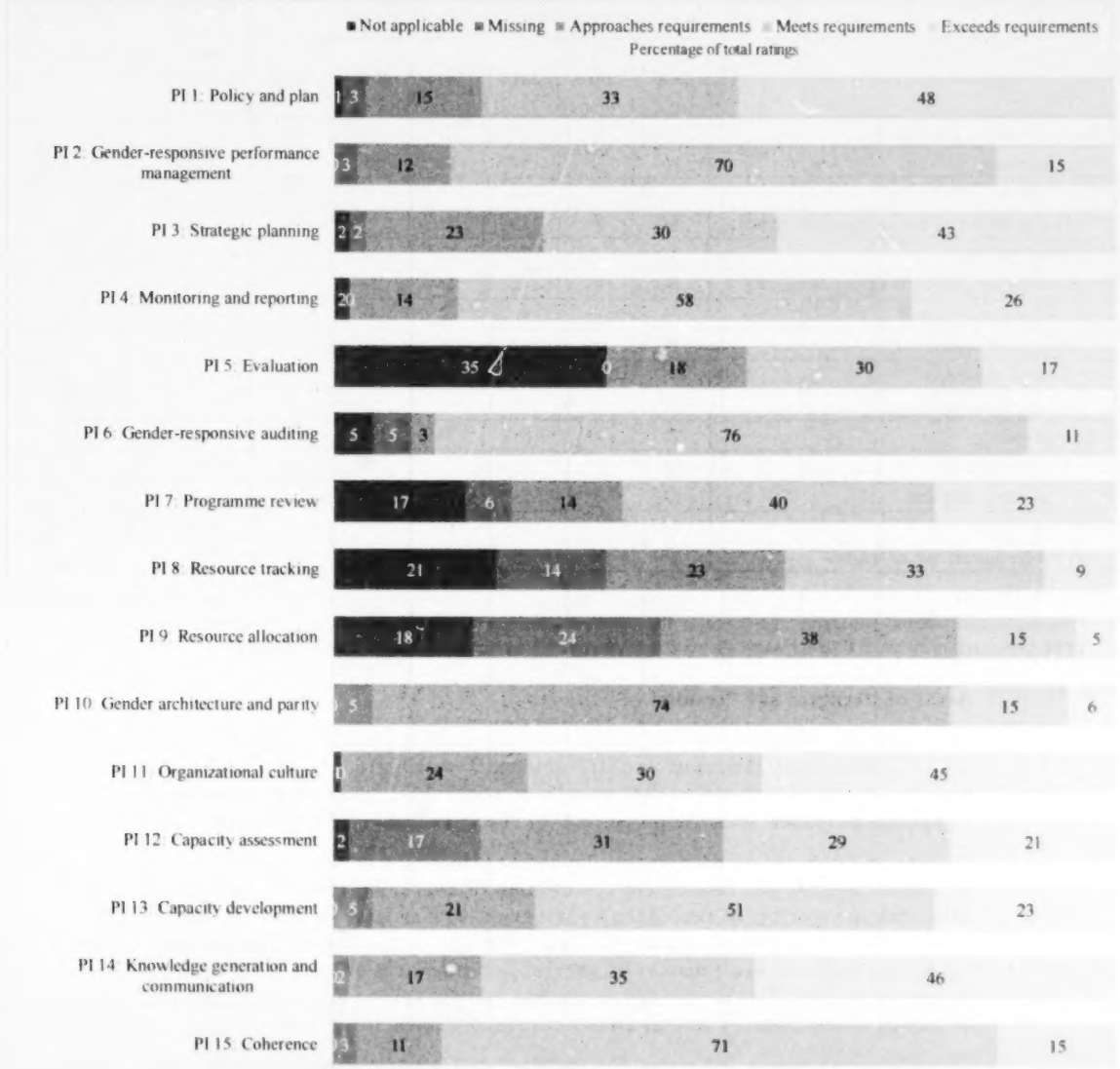
Note: No entities in the category of Training and research institutes reported data for 2012.

C. Comparative analysis by performance indicator: strengths and areas for improvement

19. Figure III provides a breakdown of ratings for all entities by performance indicator for 2017. Figure IV presents a comparison of "meets requirements" and "exceeds requirements" ratings, by indicator, for the period 2012–2017.

Figure III

Analysis of ratings for the United Nations system, by performance indicator, 2017



20. In 2017, four indicators, namely Policy and plan, Strategic planning, Organizational culture and Knowledge generation and communication, registered the

largest proportion of "exceeds requirements" ratings, with at least 43 per cent of entities[6] exceeding requirements for each. Analysis reveals that those indicators constitute drivers of change and catalyse overall entity performance by producing a cascade effect in other indicators.

Figure IV
Comparative analysis of "meets requirements" and "exceeds requirements" ratings by indicator, 2012–2017

Performance indicator, ranked by 2017 performance	Percentage of total ratings meeting or exceeding requirements (not applicable omitted)						Percentage point difference (2017–2016)	Percentage point difference (2017–2012)
	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012		
PI 6: Gender-responsive auditing	92	90	83	78	69	13	2	79
PI 15: Coherence	86	88	89	87	89	77	(2)	9
PI 4: Monitoring and reporting	86	81	68	65	50	39	5	47
PI 2: Gender-responsive performance management	85	85	83	81	75	59	0	26
PI 1: Policy and plan	82	78	73	61	50	40	4	42
PI 14: Knowledge generation and communication	82	86	72	66	52	34	(4)	48
PI 11: Organizational culture	76	75	69	63	59	48	1	28
PI 7: Programme review	76	76	63	59	47	31	0	45
PI 3: Strategic planning	75	75	73	74	58	41	0	34
PI 13: Capacity development	74	74	53	40	25	23	0	51
PI 5: Evaluation	72	58	55	50	44	36	14	36
PI 8: Resource tracking	54	50	39	30	25	22	4	32
PI 12: Capacity assessment	51	49	33	28	23	15	2	36
PI 9: Resource allocation	24	22	22	18	13	7	2	17
PI 10: Gender architecture and parity	21	25	22	21	20	13	(4)	8

Note: In order to present strengths and areas for improvement more accurately, percentages in figure IV were calculated omitting "not applicable" ratings. Therefore, percentages for "meets requirements" and "exceeds requirement" will differ slightly from those presented in figure III, which shows percentages based on all ratings, "not applicable" included.

Areas of strength: 2017 results

21. Figure IV indicates that the United Nations system registered progress for 8 of the 15 performance indicators in 2017 compared with 2016. Progress remained consistent for an additional four indicators from 2016 to 2017, all of which maintained 74 per cent or higher "meets requirements" or "exceeds requirements" ratings.

22. As in 2016, the Gender-responsive auditing indicator outperformed all other indicators, with 92 per cent of entities meeting or exceeding requirements. Since 2012, that indicator has witnessed the highest gains, with an increase of 79 percentage points in the "meets requirements" and "exceeds requirements" categories.[7] Leadership by the Representatives of Internal Audit Services of the United Nations Organizations and the increasing recognition of the key role auditing plays in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women drove performance.

23. The performance indicators for Coherence, Monitoring and reporting and Gender-responsive performance management maintained past impressive gains. Of

[6] Of 66 entities, 32 exceeded the Policy and plan indicator, 31 exceeded the Knowledge generation indicator, 30 exceeded the Organizational culture indicator and 29 exceeded the Strategic planning indicator.

[7] Seven entities in 2012 compared with 58 entities in 2017.

the reporting entities, 85 per cent (56) now include gender equality and the empowerment of women as a factor in performance assessment, up from 59 per cent (32) in 2012. Currently, 86 per cent of entities (56)[8] regularly report on performance on gender equality and empowerment of women, up from 39 per cent (19) in 2012. Those improvements demonstrate the dedication and engagement of human resources and strategic planning and reporting offices.

Progress between the previous and current reporting periods: 2016–2017

24. From 2016 to 2017 the Evaluation, Monitoring and reporting, Policy and plan and Resource tracking indicators reported noteworthy progress, each registering gains of 4 percentage points or more in the "meets requirements" and "exceeds requirements" categories. Evaluation, historically one of the weakest performance areas, achieved a significant gain of 14 percentage points in both categories.

25. The Evaluation indicator has doubled since 2012. Currently, 72 per cent of entities (31) meet and/or exceed requirements. That progress may be attributable, in part, to the adoption of human rights and gender equality as a stand-alone norm by the United Nations Evaluation Group in 2016.[9] Virtually all entities reporting against the Evaluation indicator have integrated gender equality dimensions into their evaluation policies, quality assurance mechanisms and capacity development initiatives. Support from United Nations Evaluation Group Help Desk for the Evaluation indicator and exchanges facilitated through the working group on human rights and gender equality within the United Nations Evaluation Group contributed to progress.

26. The Capacity development indicator demonstrated significant progress, with 49 entities meeting or exceeding requirements in 2017. That corresponds to an increase of 51 percentage points from 2012 to 2017, from 23 to 74 per cent. The uptake and continued implementation of the UN-Women "I Know Gender" e-training course for non-gender specialists since 2014 likely explains that progress. By February 2018, 32,454 staff of reporting entities had completed the online, self-paced course, nearly twice the number of staff who had completed the course as of March 2016. The course is now mandatory for staff in 31 entities, including in the Office of Human Resources Management of the Secretariat, up from 25 entities in 2016. A number of entities looked beyond implementing mandatory gender courses and evaluated their performance more stringently on the basis of compliance or non-compliance with such course completions. As a result, progress remained consistent, and 74 per cent of all entities met or exceeded requirements between 2016 and 2017.

27. The Policy and plan indicator demonstrated an increase of 4 percentage points from 2016 and an increase of 42 percentage points from 2012, with 82 per cent (54) of all reporting entities meeting or exceeding the requirements in 2017. The majority of policies are aligned to the System-wide Action Plan, establishing a common accountability mechanism and strengthening system-wide coherence. Gender policies and plans are a consistent focus of System-wide Action Plan implementation, as they are responsible for most strongly driving change. On average, the 54 entities that met or exceeded the Policy and plan indicator requirements in 2017 reported a "meets requirements" or "exceeds requirements" rating for 11 of 15 performance indicators. In contrast, entities without gender policies, on average, met or exceeded requirements for only five performance indicators. Further, entities meeting or exceeding requirements for the policy and plan indicator reported, on average, seven

[8] The discrepancy between the percentages for performance assessment and monitoring and reporting in the present section is owing to the omission of "not applicable" ratings in order to present strengths and areas for improvement more accurately (see note to figure IV).

[9] United Nations Evaluation Group, "Norms and standards for evaluation", 2016. Available from www.uneval.org/document/detail/1914.

times the number of "exceeds requirements" ratings relative to the others.[10] The System-wide Action Plan 2.0 offers the opportunity to support the development of the next generation of gender policies and plans that are grounded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and linked to the gender-related targets of the relevant Sustainable Development Goal(s) within entity mandates.

Areas for improvement: 2017 results

28. As in previous reporting years, Gender architecture and parity, Resource allocation, Capacity assessment and Resource tracking remain the weakest performing indicators.

29. The Gender architecture and parity and Resource allocation indicators remain particularly weak, with less than a quarter of entities meeting or exceeding requirements for those indicators (21 and 24 per cent, respectively). Just over half of entities meet the requirements for the Capacity assessment and Resource tracking indicators (51 and 54 per cent, respectively). Consistently low performance on those indicators from 2012 to 2017 suggests the need for strengthened senior management leadership and, more importantly, additional resources, and dedicated attention to addressing structural barriers to progress.

30. The Gender architecture and parity indicator declined by 4 percentage points from 2016 to 2017, from 25 to 21 per cent of entities (16 to 14) meeting or exceeding requirements. While several entities cited internal promotions and staff departures as reasons, the overall decrease is partly attributable to a stricter application of the gender parity requirements of that indicator (equal representation of women for General Service staff and for Professional staff at the P-4 level and above). The introduction of the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity in 2017 will assist entities in adhering to targets and taking concrete actions to accelerate progress in that area. Approximately 32 per cent of entities (24) aligned their corporate gender parity strategies with the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy. Furthermore, 20 per cent of entities (13) announced additional actions beyond strategy implementation for improved performance to address shortcomings in gender architecture and parity during 2018.

31. Progress was uneven across the three components of the Gender architecture and parity indicator in 2017, contributing to overall weak performance:

(a) *Gender focal point systems*. That component witnessed significant progress from 2016 to 2017. A total of 91 per cent of entities (60) reported having a gender focal point system or equivalent; and 83 per cent (55) reported that they included Professional staff at the P-4 level and above, an increase of 5 percentage points from 2016. Moreover, 84 per cent of entities (56) had established terms of reference for gender focal points, an increase of 8 percentage points from 2016. Further, the percentage of entities in which gender focal points devoted 20 per cent or more of their time to functions related to gender equality increased by 9 percentage points, from 66 to 75 per cent, respectively;[11]

(b) *Equal representation of women at all levels*. In 2017, 80 per cent of reporting entities (53) had not achieved the equal representation of women Professional staff at the P-4 level and above. While entities registered a slight

[10] Entities meeting/exceeding the Plan and policy indicator report an average of 5.8 indicators as exceeding requirements, compared with an average of only 0.8 reported by entities not meeting/exceeding the Plan and policy indicator.

[11] Forty-nine entities.

improvement of 3 percentage points from 2016, slow progress towards gender parity continues, limiting performance against that indicator;[12]

(c) *Adequate resourcing*. Only 29 per cent of entities (19) reported that their gender unit or equivalent was adequately resourced to carry out their gender-related mandates. That represents a slight increase of 4 percentage points from 2016. Persistent weakness in that area undermines efforts to mainstream gender within and across entities.

32. While it was among the weakest performing System-wide Action Plan indicators, Resource tracking nevertheless registered ongoing progress. In 2017, 54 per cent of reporting entities (28) met or exceeded requirements, an increase of 4 percentage points since 2016 and 32 percentage points since 2012. An additional seven entities reported on efforts to adopt resource-tracking mechanisms in the coming year. Despite those commitments, several departments of the Secretariat expressed continued difficulty in the development and implementation of a gender marker due to the introduction of Umoja. The System-wide Action Plan 2.0 will provide support so that entities can improve their performance on indicators in which they lag behind.

D. Remedial action plans

33. The help desk established by UN-Women for the System-wide Action Plan reviewed all reports for quality control and accuracy. The quality of System-wide Action Plan reporting has increased by 6 percentage points since 2016. Remedial action plans for 48 entities, or 76 per cent of all remedial action plans, qualified as adequate, good/satisfactory or better in 2017, which was a marked increase from the first year of reporting in 2012, where only 34 per cent of the remedial plans were considered of good quality and 22 per cent were considered adequate.

34. In 2017, reporting entities identified 101 actions to improve performance in 2018. The areas most targeted for enhanced activity included some of the weakest performing indicators, namely Resource tracking, Resource allocation, Gender architecture and parity and Capacity development. The catalytic indicator of Policy and plan was also specifically targeted for improved performance in 2018. In addition, staff other than the gender focal points or those in the gender unit were designated as responsible for follow-up action in 96 per cent of cases, reflecting an increase of 4 percentage points since 2016 and 11 percentage points since 2012. That highlights the expanding web of engagement and responsibility for gender mainstreaming beyond gender units or gender focal points.

35. Collectively, entities estimated that an additional $20 million would be required system-wide to meet the targets of the System-wide Action Plan. The largest share of resources was required for Gender architecture and parity (27 per cent), followed by Resource allocation (17 per cent) and Strategic planning (11 per cent).

E. Key drivers and lessons learned

36. Since 2012, the System-wide Action Plan has guided the United Nations system in making remarkable progress in mainstreaming gender in all institutional functions and has led to sharper insight into the key drivers of progress on mainstreaming a

[12] Gender architecture and the equal representation of women are two separate indicators in the framework of the System-wide Action Plan 2.0, in an effort to more accurately capture progress in those areas.

gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, including:

(a) *Gender equality policies*. Entities with a gender equality policy/plan meet or exceed, on average, twice the number of indicators of entities without such a policy/plan. Gender equality policies and plans that are anchored in organization-wide priorities, particularly strategic plans, and in results-based management systems enhance senior management buy-in, garner wider support and promote more effective results;

(b) *Senior management accountability mechanisms*. Entities that have gender equality policies/plans and a mechanism in place to ensure senior management accountability for gender equality and the empowerment of women are, on average, seven times more likely to exceed requirements for System-wide Action Plan indicators. Accountability for gender equality is best implemented when it targets senior leaders and includes all staff through the integration of appropriate objectives in staff members' performance plans and reviews. Linking performance management objectives on gender equality and the empowerment of women to assessing and building capacity improves compliance, results and support within entities;

(c) *Gender focal point systems*. Entities that have a dedicated gender focal point system that includes Professional staff at the P-4 level or above, written terms of reference and a minimum requirement of 20 per cent of time allocated to gender equality meet or exceed, on average, requirements for one third more indicators than those entities without a gender focal point system. Effective gender mainstreaming is better propelled by a network of focal points across all business functions and beyond gender units;

(d) *Leadership and buy-in*. By exercising bottom-up pressure for inclusive practices in all functions of the entities, global staff surveys have galvanized effective leadership support for gender equality work. Participation in system-wide, highly visible campaigns, such as the International Gender Champions initiative, where commitments are specific, mandatory and frequently monitored, creates healthy peer group pressure among leaders and ignites support for gender equality;

(e) *Capacity-building*. Entities that provide and require gender training for all staff at all levels, including senior managers, meet or exceed more than twice the number of indicators than entities that have no training in place;

(f) *Partnerships and joint initiatives*. In a context of shrinking financial resources, partnerships dedicated to sharing System-wide Action Plan-related knowledge and good practices have sustained or propelled the performance of entities. An active and resourced hub for coordination and coherence is critical for monitoring and communicating system-wide progress based on the progressive development of capacities and functions. Building and maintaining a system-wide network, including staff outside of gender units and working through inter-agency networks, has proven an effective means of ensuring gender mainstreaming and system-wide ownership of the System-wide Action Plan.

F. Next generation of accountability frameworks for gender mainstreaming

United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2.0

37. UN-Women coordinated an extensive, system-wide consultative process throughout 2016 and 2017 to update the new System-wide Action Plan 2.0, on which

entities will report from January 2019. The new framework underwent two rounds of piloting by 8 entities between May and September 2016, and 10 entities between January and March 2018.

38. The System-wide Action Plan 2.0 further refines existing indicators and anchors the framework within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It introduces three new indicators focused on results and one on Leadership, and expands the accountability framework to encompass system-wide reporting on results linked to gender-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Sustainable Development Goal 5. As it is the first attempt to report on system-wide gender equality results more systematically, the reporting methodology may require further fine-tuning after the first round of reporting in 2019.

39. The successful implementation of the System-wide Action Plan highlights its potential for replicability through the United Nations country team gender equality System-wide Action Plan scorecard and in institutional and sectoral contexts at the national level.

40. In 2017, UN-Women developed a sector-wide action plan for gender equality and the empowerment of women for the water, sanitation and hygiene sector. It is expected to be piloted in selected countries in 2018–2019.

IV. Mainstreaming in operational activities

41. The United Nations development system responds to gender inequality by supporting governments in integrating gender equality into national development and common country programming processes through dedicated gender equality outcomes, as well as through gender mainstreaming in other areas.[13]

A. Promoting an enabling environment for gender equality

42. In 2016, 54 United Nations country teams provided technical support for the formulation of national development plans. The support consisted of collecting baseline data, identifying vulnerable groups and setting targets. More than half of those country teams indicated that they provided support related to Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

43. Support to governments also included promoting progress on globally agreed goals and aligning with international and regional normative standards. United Nations country teams reported on inter-agency efforts to strengthen legal and policy frameworks to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women in almost 60 countries. They provided a mix of advisory, technical and capacity-building support to the development, revision, implementation and monitoring of national gender equality policies, including national action plans.

44. In Swaziland, the United Nations country team supported the launch of a national strategy on ending violence, including a costed action plan. The strategy created national and regional networks, involved men in the fight against violence against women and established an essential services package and minimum standards for gender-based violence in emergencies. In Viet Nam, support was provided for the development of the first national thematic project on gender-based violence prevention and response, dedicated to improving essential support services for

[13] Unless otherwise indicated, the analyses and examples in the present section draw from the United Nations Development Group strategic summaries of coordination results for 2017 and 2018.

survivors and preventing and responding to sexual harassment in the workplace and violence in schools and public spaces.

45. United Nations country teams also supported legislative reforms to protect the rights of women and girls through the elimination of discriminatory provisions. In Cameroon, Chad, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Nepal and Peru, governments amended their penal/criminal codes to end impunity for gender-based violence, decriminalize abortion in the case of rape, ensure greater access to abortion services in specific circumstances, deter early marriage and end the practice of *chaupadi*. In Rwanda, the government, with the active participation of the national gender machinery, restored a woman's right to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave.

46. Efforts were made to align laws and policies[14] with international human rights standards and to mainstream gender considerations in national development plans (Namibia, Mauritius, Somalia) and sector strategies, such as health, especially maternal and child health and sexual and reproductive health and rights (Ecuador, Iraq, Mongolia, Uganda, Zambia), labour/employment (Burundi, Republic of Moldova, Viet Nam) and education (Turkmenistan, Zimbabwe). In Albania, the government integrated gender-related objectives and targets in their midterm budget programming for 2018–2020, allocating $90 million from domestic resources to gender equality programmes.

47. United Nations country teams also supported national efforts to end harmful practices against girls, such as early, forced and child marriage and female genital mutilation. United Nations country teams sensitized more than 8,000 men, women, youth and religious leaders on female genital mutilation/circumcision and child marriage in the Gambia, conducted a qualitative assessment on child marriage in Bhutan, launched a three-year campaign to end female genital mutilation/cutting in Ethiopia, successfully advocated for the outlawing of child marriage in Malawi and Zimbabwe and developed a national strategy on ending child marriage in Nepal and Zambia. Also in Zambia, the United Nations provided support to the Ministry of Gender in the development of a costed national action plan to support a multisectoral response to the national strategy on ending child marriage.

48. United Nations country teams continue to enhance the capacity of governments and civil society to engage with international human rights mechanisms through meeting reporting obligations and in tracking the implementation of recommendations. In 2016, 61 per cent of United Nations country teams supported universal periodic review processes and 73 per cent facilitated government follow-up on the recommendations of human rights treaty bodies to States on human rights issues.[15] In 2016–2017, approximately 50 United Nations country teams reported on their support to governments in meeting their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. That support focused on four broad areas: (a) providing technical assistance to governments to help them implement their reporting obligations under the Convention; (b) building the capacity of and promoting civil society participation, namely women's organizations, in the Convention reporting mechanisms through the submission of shadow reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; (c) drafting a United

[14] Examples include the National Youth Policy (Guyana); a national empowerment strategy and plan for rural women (Tunisia); the National Strategy on Countering Terrorism and Extremism (Tajikistan); the National Employment Strategy (Republic of Moldova); the Marshall Plan against Poverty (Mauritius); and draft legislation on the trafficking of persons (India).

[15] United Nations Development Group, "Lift off: Agenda 2030. Shared results of the UNDG in 2016", 2017, p. 9. Available from https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/UNDG_ResultsReport2016_web_final.pdf.

Nations country team report; and (d) monitoring and following up on the implementation of recommendations and concluding observations.

49. In Cabo Verde, the United Nations country team supported the integration of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women into a national plan for gender equality for 2015–2018 and a national plan to combat gender-based violence for 2014–2018. In its confidential report to the Committee, the United Nations country team in Guatemala recommended, inter alia, elevating the Presidential Secretariat for Women to the level of a ministry, strengthening women's access to justice and to decent work with adequate social and labour protections and reforming the electoral law and the rules of political parties to include gender parity and the inclusion of indigenous peoples.

B. Embedding integrated policy support in common country programming processes to support gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

50. Common country programming processes represent critical entry points for United Nations country teams to deliver integrated support across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development with government and relevant stakeholders. That approach is particularly relevant for the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective and for ensuring the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls across all of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

51. Through common country analyses, United Nations agencies, with national governments and other stakeholders, conduct joint analyses and set priorities for the United Nations development system. Guided by new global minimum standards, common country analyses require a rigorous gender analysis that goes beyond data disaggregated by age and sex to identify and explain the root causes of gender and other inequalities. Such analyses can strategically inform the development of gender-responsive United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks.

52. In 2016, 70 per cent of United Nations country teams had undertaken a common country analysis for their respective United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, an increase of 9 percentage points from 2015.[16] In preparation for the first common country analysis of Burundi, the United Nations country team convened diverse stakeholders to identify development and humanitarian challenges, generate potential solutions and consider the comparative advantage of the United Nations development system in addressing them. Stakeholders included women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex groups, youth, faith-based leaders and vulnerable populations. In Jordan, the common country analysis included a gender analysis interrogating the underlying causes of social, economic and political disparities between men and women. As a result, the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (2018–2022) of Jordan has a dedicated gender equality outcome, with a specific focus on women's political and economic participation.

53. A United Nations Development Assistance Framework describes the strategic and collective response of the United Nations system to national development priorities and is the basis on which it coordinates and delivers integrated and coherent support. United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks continue to demonstrate an increasing focus on gender equality. Of the 58 Frameworks that

[16] Ibid., p. 20.

commenced implementation in 2016 and at the beginning of 2017, 72 per cent (42) specified gender results at the outcome level.[17]

54. United Nations country teams continued to pursue the twin-track approach to gender mainstreaming in United Nations Development Assistance Framework roll-out processes throughout 2016 and 2017 and in line with new guidance for a new generation of Frameworks in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[18] The guidance acknowledges gender equality as one of three key programming principles of integrated, common country programming. The United Nations Development Group's resource book for mainstreaming gender in United Nations common programming at the country level further supports the prioritization and integration of gender equality issues in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and other common programming processes.

55. While current trends indicate that an increasing proportion of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks feature gender equality as a stand-alone outcome and/or as mainstreamed across all other outcome areas, ensuring that gender equality objectives and targets are systematically mainstreamed in results, monitoring and evaluation and budgetary frameworks is essential. While the Frameworks of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Uruguay and Zambia used different disaggregated indicators (e.g., age, gender, geography), a review of 27 Frameworks in 2016 found that less than half included disaggregated indicators of vulnerable groups.[19] Because data disaggregation is often limited to sex, tracking progress on other forms of intersectional discrimination and inequalities becomes difficult. In addition, gender outcomes are commonly underresourced in budgetary frameworks.[20]

56. Joint programmes enable the United Nations development system to strengthen its integrated support as well as mainstream gender systematically in operational responses in all sectors, across all countries and in partnership with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, especially women's and community-based organizations, feminist groups, women human rights defenders and girls' and youth-led organizations.

57. In 2016, of 371 joint programmes reported, 109 focused on gender equality and addressed issues of gender-based violence, maternal and child health and women's economic participation.[21] Gender perspectives were also mainstreamed in joint programmes on climate change, poverty reduction, food security, social protection, peace, reconciliation and resilience-building initiatives and public-sector reform. That is consistent with past trends in which approximately 30 per cent of the joint programmes focused on gender equality, which constituted one of the most frequent areas of focus.

[17] United Nations Sustainable Development Group Office, information management system, 2017.

[18] United Nations Development Group, "United Nations Development Assistance Framework guidance", 2017. Available from https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2017-UNDAF_Guidance_01-May-2017.pdf.

[19] United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office, "2016 United Nations Development Assistance Framework: desk review", 2017, p. 18. Available from https://data2.unhcr.org/fr/documents/download/53006.

[20] Tony Beck, "UNCT performance indicators for gender equality and the empowerment of women: desk review 2012-2014", prepared for the United Nations Development Group Gender Equality Task Team, July 2015. Available from https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/UNDG-TT-Scorecard-Desk-Review-2012-2014-Final-Report-7-July-2015.pdf.

[21] United Nations Development Group, "Lift off: Agenda 2030", p. 53.

C. Mainstreaming gender across the humanitarian and peace and security pillars

58. More than half of the countries where the United Nations development system has a presence report on natural or human-made crises, conflicts and disasters. However, reporting on actions to mainstream gender in humanitarian and peace and security actions in the strategic summaries of coordination results for 2017 and 2018 remains scant. UN-Women was implementing peace, security and humanitarian activities in 58 countries at the end of 2016.

59. In Fiji, UN-Women supported the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation with regard to co-leading coordination efforts on gender-based violence in emergencies in the aftermath of Cyclone Winston. UN-Women also contributed a gender impact analysis to the post-disaster needs assessment and provided gender-responsive recommendations for recovery partners. With the Ministry of Health of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, UN-Women and the Pan American Health Organization integrated women's needs into the national strategy for prevention and control of the Zika virus, ensuring women's active participation from the most affected areas.

60. In Bangladesh, Myanmar and Nepal, technical and surge capacity support on gender to humanitarian country teams also increased women's engagement in humanitarian action by incorporating gender equality into humanitarian coordination architecture and building capacity on gender analysis through guidelines and workshops.

61. To increase women's leadership and participation in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and reconciliation, United Nations country teams supported governments in the implementation of Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, particularly through the development of national action plans for the implementation of Council resolution 1325 (2000) in Kenya, Maldives, Uganda and Ukraine. UN-Women provided vital support to civil society organizations and State actors to develop the national action plan for Kenya, which the Kenyan Government adopted as an accountability framework for the implementation of existing national commitments on gender equality and enhancing women's participation and leadership in public and political decision-making at all levels. In Ukraine, United Nations country teams fostered and strengthened partnerships with women's groups and civil society, and sensitized Parliament on the implementation and monitoring of the national action plan.

62. At the global level, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee updated its gender equality policy and developed an accountability framework to monitor the progress and implementation of the policy. The Committee's Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action seeks to make gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls a core principle of humanitarian preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

D. Gender capacities of United Nations country teams

63. In 2016, 221 of 990 inter-agency groups that supported the delivery of joint United Nations actions and results focused on Sustainable Development Goal 5.[22]

64. The gender theme groups and results groups on gender of the United Nations Development Group provide strategic policy, technical and capacity-building support on gender to common country programming processes, normative and human rights

[22] Ibid., p. 41.

work, as well as advocacy and communications at the country level. They deliver greater United Nations country team coherence through joint planning and implementation and oversee and report on gender equality results with national counterparts.[23]

65. While a regional evaluation by UN-Women in Europe and Central Asia highlighted the importance of gender theme groups and results groups on gender in strengthening gender mainstreaming and accountability at the country level, it also found uneven technical capacity, a lack of funding and an inconsistent commitment to gender equality as consistent challenges for those groups.[24] That finding corresponds to the generally uneven gender capacities of United Nations country teams. In 2016, almost half of United Nations country teams (64 of 131) reported on actions to enhance staff capacity on gender mainstreaming, while 26 per cent had dedicated gender advisers in place.[25]

66. Ensuring strong gender capacities within United Nations country teams facilitates more gender-responsive common country programming processes and strengthens accountability for implementing gender equality commitments. However, in 2016, less than one third of United Nations country teams had undertaken a gender equality scorecard exercise in the last four years, including the six United Nations country teams that piloted the updated United Nations country team gender equality System-wide Action Plan scorecard.[26] The scorecard uses 15 common indicators to assess the performance of United Nations country teams against minimum standards on gender mainstreaming, which are harmonized with the System-wide Action Plan's standards and build on lessons learned to improve performance and progress on gender-related Sustainable Development Goal targets.

67. At the regional level, United Nations Development Group results groups, including those on gender, provide leadership, oversight and technical expertise linking global policy with operational activities at the country level. For the first time, a statement of collaboration between regional United Nations Development Group teams and regional economic commissions was implemented in 2016 to strengthen regional coordination and coherence support to United Nations country teams. That resulted in a framework addressing the discriminatory effects of extremism against women in Asia and the Pacific, advocacy on women's property rights in Latin America and support for joint operations in Europe and Central Asia for refugees and migrants fleeing Afghanistan, Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.[27]

E. Data for evidence-informed, gender-responsive policies and programmes

68. In 2016 and 2017, 25 United Nations country teams reported on partnerships with governments, civil society and donors that supported a range of studies and surveys on different dimensions of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

[23] Ibid., p. 22.

[24] UN-Women, "Coordinating for gender equality results: regional evaluation of UN-Women's contribution to UN system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women in Europe and Central Asia", 2016. Available from http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/2016/08/coorgenderequalresults-eca-web.pdf?la=en&vs=4654.

[25] United Nations Sustainable Development Group Office, information management system, 2017.

[26] Ibid.

[27] United Nations Development Group, "Lift off: Agenda 2030", pp. 45 and 46.

69. Understanding the prevalence of gender-based violence was an area of particular focus in 10 countries.[28] In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the United Nations Population Fund, UN-Women and the World Health Organization supported the Lao National Commission for the Advancement of Women and the Lao Statistics Bureau in the implementation of a national survey on women's health and life experiences, which was the country's first survey to focus on the impact of gender-based violence. UN-Women supported an innovative costing study on violence to assist the government and partners with planning and budgeting actions to respond to violence against women and girls in different contexts and sectors. Grenada is undertaking a national prevalence survey on gender-based violence with support from UN-Women and the Caribbean Development Bank, the first country in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States to do so.

70. However, the lack of availability of gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex, age and other factors continues to be a challenge. The failure to prioritize gender equality in national statistical and data-collection systems hampers efforts to design evidence-informed policies and to report on progress.

71. Underscoring the issue, there are no internationally accepted standards for 23 of the 53 global-level Sustainable Development indicators that explicitly reference women, girls, gender or sex. For another 21 indicators, the coverage is low and uneven, although the methodology and data at the country level exist. [29]

V. Gaps and challenges

72. Important progress was made in achieving greater system-wide coherence on and accountability for gender equality and the empowerment of women and in mainstreaming gender as part of the coordinated and integrated support of the United Nations development system. However, certain gaps continue to persist, including continued underperformance on indicators related to human and financial resources, which hindered the full achievement of System-wide Action Plan requirements by the 2017 deadline.

73. Gender equality capacities remain mixed and uneven across entities and in terms of development planning, implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation. Comprehensive and longer-term capacity development approaches are needed, including with regard to gender theme groups and results groups on gender at the country and regional levels.

74. The continued absence of a system-wide, harmonized gender marker to track financial allocations and expenditures for gender equality across different sectoral and thematic areas constrains the ability of the United Nations system to identify investment gaps and commit to specific resource targets. Gender mainstreaming across all policies and programmes can increase finances beyond investments made only in gender equality programming and redress, in part, the chronic, system-wide underinvestment for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

75. Much of the progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women reported at the country level rightly focuses on removing the structural barriers that perpetuate discrimination against women and girls and their unequal legal, economic, political and social status. However, considerable effort is still required to mainstream gender perspectives in common country programming processes to support a gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that

[28] Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Cuba, Ecuador, Grenada, India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Namibia and Turkmenistan.

[29] See https://sustainable-development-goals.iisd.org/sdgs-in-focus/SDG5.

addresses, among other things, women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care work and their limited economic opportunities and access to infrastructure and services, as well as gaps in social protection, in a more comprehensive and integrated manner.

76. Humanitarian responses fall short of consistently accounting for the different needs and priorities of women and girls and do not sufficiently engage women's and girls' leadership and participation in shaping solutions at local and international levels (see S/2016/822, para. 19). The updated Inter-Agency Standing Committee gender policy and accountability framework is a step in the right direction.

77. Limited national data disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, age, disability and other intersecting factors continue to constrain the ability of the United Nations system to adequately develop evidence-informed policies and programmes that address inequalities, as well as its ability to review and monitor progress on gender equality targets and goals in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

78. The System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women has been a driver of significantly improved institutional performance on and accountability for gender mainstreaming across all United Nations entities. The System-wide Action Plan 2.0 is designed to build on its predecessor's achievements, address deficits and better link institutional performance to gender equality results, representing the first effort to systematically report on system-wide gender equality.

79. Gender equality policies and plans, gender training for all staff at all levels and specific accountability targeting senior leaders and including all staff performance plans and reviews have been specifically targeted for improvement with regard to System-wide Action Plan performance in 2018.

80. The United Nations development system continues to provide and align its support with the interlinked and mutually reinforcing nature of the Sustainable Development Goals. Ongoing discussions regarding the proposals of the Secretary-General to reposition the United Nations development system to deliver on the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offer strategic opportunities to further enhance the coordination, transparency and accountability of the United Nations system on gender mainstreaming in order to better support Member States in the implementation of the transformative 2030 Agenda.

81. In that context, the Economic and Social Council may wish to request the United Nations system, including the specialized agencies and funds and programmes, to consider the following recommendations:

(a) Exercise continued leadership and support at the highest levels, including through resident coordinators, for gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes, and promote greater accountability for gender equality at all levels by supporting the full implementation of gender policies, including the updated System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2.0 and the updated United Nations country team gender equality System-wide Action Plan scorecard;

(b) Ensure enhanced focus on gender mainstreaming and gender-equality results across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by engaging in the system-wide strategic documentation and reporting on the contributions of the United Nations to the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) With the continued guidance and support of the United Nations Development Group, enhance integrated support for gender equality and the

empowerment of women and girls to the next generation of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks by strengthening normative and operational coherence, including the "leave no one behind" principle, and ensuring a dedicated gender equality outcome as well as the integration of gender equality and the empowerment of women across all other Sustainable Development Goal-related outcomes, indicators/targets and budgets. UN-Women, in countries where it has a presence, can guide the United Nations development system in that respect;

(d) Bolster regional and country-level quality assurance processes to ensure that common country analyses and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks are informed by robust gender analyses, and reinforce the cross-cutting linkages of Sustainable Development Goal 5 with gender-related targets of other Goals;

(e) As key drivers of progress, ensure that updated gender equality policies of United Nations entities are anchored in organizational strategic, programmatic and results-based frameworks, including planning and budget documents and evaluation and corporate reporting systems, and are aligned with the performance indicators of the system-wide accountability framework (System-wide Action Plan 2.0);

(f) Invest adequate financial and human resources for gender mainstreaming commensurate with corporate commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and with the gender equality ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(g) Enhance financing for gender equality in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through thematic, coordination and pooled funding for collective, integrated action at the country level to support impact at scale;

(h) Accelerate the development of a harmonized gender marker across the United Nations system to track and monitor gender-related resource allocation and expenditures across all policies and programmes as well as to better measure and respond to resource deficits, including in the context of United Nations Development Assistance Framework common budgetary frameworks;

(i) Assess and address persistent capacity gaps on gender mainstreaming through a range and combination of different measures, such as mandatory training for all staff, including senior managers; linking performance objectives on gender equality and the empowerment of women to capacity-building; strengthening collaboration and coordination among United Nations staff working on gender equality and gender focal points across the development, peace and security and human rights and humanitarian action pillars; and reinforcing dedicated expertise on gender equality at the regional and country levels, including gender theme groups or results groups on gender;

(j) Intensify efforts to achieve gender parity, including through robust implementation of the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity;

(k) Implement normative commitments on gender equality in humanitarian action and in women and peace and security, including through existing gender policies, by increasing the deployment of gender experts, enhancing the collection and use of disaggregated data and strengthening reporting systems for gender equality results in those pillars;

(l) Prioritize the production of gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex and other relevant factors in national statistical systems through increased technical, capacity-building and financial support and through greater intersectoral collaboration towards the high-quality production, analysis and use of gender statistics;

(m) Support, at the request of Member States, the adaptation of the System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women to promote gender mainstreaming and accountability in national institutions, including national women's machineries and those corresponding to sectors linked to the Sustainable Development Goals.

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Item 75 (a) of the preliminary list*
Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Economic and Social Council
2018 session
27 July 2017–26 July 2018
Agenda item 9
Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The report is also submitted in response to Assembly resolution 72/133 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2017/14. The period covered by the report is 1 January to 31 December 2017.

The report provides an overview of efforts to improve humanitarian coordination and response as well as major humanitarian trends, challenges and measures taken regarding famine and the risk of famine, severe food insecurity, climate-related shocks, international humanitarian law and human rights law, forced displacement and financing and enhancing humanitarian action in the age of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the commitment to leave no one behind.

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I. Introduction

A. Overview of key trends

1. Humanitarian emergencies fuelled by conflicts and disasters associated with natural hazards once again drove humanitarian needs to a new high in 2017. At the end of the year, 135.7 million people needed humanitarian assistance, and humanitarian funding requirements peaked at $23.5 billion. [1] Humanitarian organizations responded by targeting a record number of 101.2 million people to receive aid, saving millions of lives, reducing suffering and promoting human dignity.

2. Food insecurity was a key cause of humanitarian requirements in 2017.[2] Some 124 million people in 51 countries were food insecure and required urgent humanitarian action to save lives, protect livelihoods and reduce acute hunger and malnutrition, an increase from 108 million in 2016.[3] Approximately 60 per cent of the world's hungry live in countries in conflict.

3. Following the Secretary-General's call to action, the international community came together to respond to and prevent famines in north-eastern Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen, where nearly 15 million people received some form of life-saving assistance. Concerted efforts are still urgently needed to reverse rising food insecurity and end the scourge of famine.

4. Exacerbated by climate change, extreme weather events, flooding, drought and other disasters destroyed lives and livelihoods and contributed to displacement across the world. The number of people affected by disasters associated with natural hazards regularly exceeds 100 million annually, with an average of 25.3 million people displaced each year since 2008. All regions experienced devastating damage as a result of natural disasters in 2017, the warmest year on record in the absence of El Niño.

5. Conflict continues to be a major driver of humanitarian need, with conflicts increasing significantly in number and intensity over the past 10 years. The total number of people forcibly displaced by conflict and violence reached a record 65.6 million by the end of 2016, 40.3 million of whom were internally displaced. Internal displacement is increasingly protracted, with insufficient attention paid to durable solutions. The unprecedented number of displaced persons is the result of not only conflict, but also the brutality of the parties to hostilities.

6. Failure to protect civilians caught in conflict has resulted in incalculable suffering. Persistent disregard for international humanitarian law and international human rights law and impunity for violations deepen humanitarian crises. Women and children are at high risk. Warfare and sieges in urban areas, the starvation of civilians as a method of war and the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects are killing and maiming non-combatants and destroying vital civilian infrastructure. The deliberate denial of humanitarian access and bureaucratic impediments to the delivery of aid are prevalent in current conflicts.

7. The global humanitarian system is more effective than ever before and is saving lives and protecting people on a scale never previously achieved. Principled humanitarian action and international coordination of humanitarian aid in accordance

[1] Donors were more generous than ever, contributing $13.97 billion to inter-agency appeals.
[2] United Nations, *World Humanitarian Data and Trends 2017* (New York, 2017).
[3] Food Security Information Network, Global Report on Food Crises 2018.

with General Assembly resolution 46/182 remain critical. However, the humanitarian system remains under strain. The gap between needs and available funding grew during the year. Despite the increased generosity of donors, humanitarian response plans and appeals were only 58.9 per cent funded;[4] it is critical they be funded fully.

B. Opportunities ahead

8. The international community must accelerate efforts to prevent and end the humanitarian suffering seen in 2017 and to address the forces driving humanitarian crises. Ongoing efforts to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Samoa Pathway and the New Urban Agenda will help to mitigate humanitarian crises and reduce suffering over the medium to longer term.

9. The expected adoption in 2018 of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and a global compact on refugees presents major opportunities to enhance international responses to migration, large movements of refugees and protracted refugee situations. Furthermore, the twentieth anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement presents an opportunity to consider strategies to ensure that internally displaced persons are adequately protected and assisted and to prevent and reduce the incidence of such displacement.

10. The proposals of the Secretary-General for repositioning the United Nations development system, the prevention agenda, peace and security reform, the United Nations system-wide strategy on gender parity, the new strategy to combat sexual exploitation and abuse, and management reform complement and reinforce the work of the humanitarian system and will increase the coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations in the field.

11. The ongoing implementation of commitments and initiatives launched at the World Humanitarian Summit advance the vision of the Agenda for Humanity to end conflict, alleviate suffering and reduce risk and vulnerability. The reports of stakeholders, reflected in the Platform for Action, Commitments and Transformations[5] (see A/71/353), show that change is under way.

II. Overview of humanitarian emergencies in 2017

A. Complex emergencies

12. The United Nations and its humanitarian partners responded to several crises during the year, including in several complex emergencies, where serious violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and international human rights law continued, impediments to access were prevalent, the protection of civilians remained a serious concern and sexual and gender-based violence remained a disturbing trend.

13. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, at the end of the year 13.1 million people needed humanitarian assistance, more than twice the caseload in early 2017. More than 2.16 million people were displaced, bringing the number of internally

[4] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Financial Tracking Service.

[5] See also www.agendaforhumanity.org/about-us.

displaced people to 4.49 million, the highest number in any country in Africa. Some 630,500 Congolese remained refugees.

14. In Iraq, half of the almost 6 million people displaced since 2014 remained displaced in 2017. Almost 1 million people were displaced owing to the fighting in Mosul, with humanitarians providing emergency aid to some 1.7 million people. By the end of 2017, some 8.7 million people needed humanitarian assistance.

15. In Yemen, an estimated 20.7 million people, 55 per cent of them children, needed humanitarian assistance. More than 17 million people were food insecure, and nearly 7 million severely so. An unprecedented cholera outbreak resulted in more than 1 million suspected cases and some 2,200 deaths, and a diphtheria outbreak — the first since 1982 — began in August.

16. In the Syrian Arab Republic, at the end of the year some 13.1 million people needed humanitarian assistance. Safe, unimpeded and sustained access remained a significant challenge, with nearly 2.5 million people living in hard-to-reach areas and close to 420,000 living in besieged areas. The protection of civilians remained a grave concern, and indiscriminate attacks on populated areas and attacks on hospitals, health-care centres and medical personnel, education facilities and humanitarian workers and convoys remained widespread.

17. In Myanmar, the humanitarian situation deteriorated drastically during the year. More than 655,000 Rohingya had fled violence to seek refuge in Bangladesh by year's end. Combined with the estimated 212,000 Rohingya already in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, plus the affected host communities, 1.2 million people were targeted for humanitarian assistance in Bangladesh. Solutions to the crisis lie in Myanmar, and the Government needs urgently to create conditions for the voluntary, safe and sustainable return of refugees. In Myanmar, the humanitarian needs of Rohingya and other vulnerable groups in Rakhine State remained high, as did those of internally displaced people and communities affected by continued conflict in Kachin and Shan States.

18. In Somalia, acute humanitarian needs increased significantly owing to limited rain, large-scale displacement, lack of access to basic services and ongoing conflict. More than 1 million people were displaced, mainly from rural areas to urban centres, as a result of drought and conflict, and some 870,000 Somali refugees remained in the region and abroad. At the end of 2017, 6.2 million people required humanitarian and protection assistance.

19. In South Sudan, 7.6 million people were in need of assistance and protection and more than 6 million were severely food insecure at midyear. More than 668,000 people fled the country, bringing the number of South Sudanese refugees to greater than 2.4 million. Some 1.9 million people were internally displaced.

20. In the Sudan, large-scale protracted displacement continued to drive humanitarian and protection needs, especially in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile States, with some 4.8 million people in need of assistance. Aid reached some areas for the first time in several years. Continued violence and worsening food insecurity in South Sudan drove more than 196,000 refugees into the Sudan.

21. In the Sahel region, 30 million people faced food insecurity. Conflict left more than 10 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance in north-eastern Nigeria and parts of Cameroon, Chad and the Niger. At the end of 2017, some 2.3 million people remained displaced. In Mali, insecurity spread and 3.8 million people needed humanitarian assistance.

22. In Libya, by the end of the year, 1.1 million people needed humanitarian assistance and 217,000 remained internally displaced. More than 400,000 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers required humanitarian assistance. Abuse and exploitation, including in detention centres, remained a serious concern.

23. In the Central African Republic, the deterioration of the crisis caused an increase of almost 80 per cent in the number of internally displaced people, which exceeded 690,000. The number of refugees in neighbouring countries also increased by over 25 per cent, representing the highest recorded number of people forcibly displaced within and outside the Central African Republic since the height of the crisis.

24. In Burundi, the number of people in need of assistance increased from 3.0 million to 3.6 million, representing some 30 per cent of the country's population, including 1.9 million children. At the end of 2017, some 188,000 people were internally displaced, while some 400,000 had fled the country.

25. Conflict in Afghanistan resulted in the internal displacement of nearly 498,000 people and more than 10,400 casualties among civilians, almost of them half women and children. Some 81 per cent of those displaced were severely food insecure. Attacks directed against or indiscriminately harming civilians and civilian objects continued.

26. In Pakistan, humanitarian action centred on the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the Malakand Division, where some 5 million people had been displaced since 2008. By September, the return of all but 43,549 families had been facilitated. Pakistan continued to host nearly 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees and an estimated 1 million undocumented Afghans.

27. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the protracted protection crisis continued. Two million Palestinians experienced or were at risk of physical violence, displacement and denial of access to livelihoods. Limited access to essential services such as water and health care affected the most vulnerable, especially in Gaza.

28. In Ukraine, some 3.8 million people needed humanitarian assistance. The shelling of urban areas and civilian infrastructure placed people on the "contact line" at risk. There are almost a million monthly crossings of the contact line, which has become increasingly contaminated by mines. Food insecurity doubled, with 1.2 million people considered moderately or severely food insecure.

29. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remained entrenched in a humanitarian crisis. Some 10.5 million people, 41 per cent of the population, were undernourished. The ability of humanitarian actors to deliver life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable in the country has been challenging owing to unintended effects of the sanctions regimes, and funding remained critically low.

30. In the Philippines, violence displaced more than 360,000 people in Marawi City and a further 19,100 people across Mindanao.

B. Disasters associated with natural hazards

31. In the Southern African region, the effects of the 2015/16 El Niño episode persisted into 2017. An estimated 32 million people were food insecure between June 2016 and March 2017. Cyclones and floods destroyed lives and livelihoods and damaged infrastructure and property in the region. Flooding exacerbated poor water and sanitation conditions leading to cholera outbreaks in several countries and an unprecedented outbreak of plague in Madagascar.

32. In the Horn of Africa, humanitarian needs remained high in Ethiopia, with 8.5 million severely food-insecure people and 1.7 million internally displaced people at the end of the year. Severe drought affected parts of Kenya, with some 5.6 million people needing humanitarian assistance. Drought undermined livelihoods and coping capacity.

33. In Asia and the Pacific, typhoons, tropical cyclones and storms and severe flooding affected Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam, affecting millions. Severe flooding in Bangladesh, India and Nepal affected an estimated 40 million people at the height of the crisis, and 1.75 million people were temporarily displaced. In the Philippines, Tropical Storm Kai-Tak temporarily displaced 790,000 people and Tropical Storm Tembin displaced 435,000 people. In Vanuatu, Tropical Cyclone Donna affected three provinces, and the volcanic activity of Monaro Voui led to the evacuation of Ambae Island.

34. Increases in rainfall led to severe flooding in Peru, affecting 1.1 million people. Earthquakes in Mexico affected some 800,000 people and killed some 450. In Colombia, a mudslide in the municipality of Mocoa killed 332 people and left more than 22,000 in need.

35. In September, three category 5 hurricanes swept through the Caribbean, devastating the lives of millions of people and leaving hundreds of thousands displaced. Humanitarian partners launched a regional response plan for $27.1 million for 265,000 people. Under a plan of action for Cuba, $55.8 million was sought for some 2.15 million people. A Hurricane Maria flash appeal for Dominica was launched to raise $32 million to help some 65,000 people. The Central Emergency Response Fund allocated $11 million to jump-start relief efforts across the Caribbean. Early warning and early action saved lives, ensuring access to essential services. In Cuba, robust preparedness measures enabled 1.9 million people to evacuate the island. In Barbuda, the entire population of about 1,600 people was evacuated. Those measures were possible thanks to effective national, regional and international disaster coordination structures.

36. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency deployed more than 90 experts to undertake search-and-rescue operations, damage and needs analyses and relief operations and proactively sought international support to meet critical needs. United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination and surge teams, which were pre-positioned in the region, boosted coordination, civil-military coordination and information management efforts.

37. The largest United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination mission carried out during the year was in response to Hurricane Irma. Demonstrating its invaluable role in sudden-onset emergencies, United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination response teams have responded to more than 281 emergencies in over 100 countries since its inception 25 years ago. The teams were deployed rapidly to 13 disaster response missions, in addition to carrying out activities aimed at improving national and regional preparedness.

38. Further details on humanitarian responses to natural disasters will be addressed in the report of the Secretary-General to be submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/132.

III. Key themes in 2017

A. Upholding norms

Respect for international humanitarian and human rights law

39. Lack of respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law remains one of the most pressing challenges. In too many armed conflicts, parties continue to flout the fundamental rules of international humanitarian law: distinction, proportionality and precaution. Targeted or indiscriminate attacks are killing and injuring large numbers of civilians and damaging essential civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, and deepening humanitarian crises marked by immense suffering, massive displacement and hunger. The lack of accountability for serious violations has generated a climate of impunity that encourages disrespect for the law.

40. It is imperative that concerted global efforts be made to enhance civilian protection in armed conflict. In the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/2017/414), a global protection crisis requiring Member States and other stakeholders to join a global effort commensurate with the scale of the crisis was described. The development of national protection frameworks, the implementation of good practices and the strengthening of accountability mechanisms all contribute to enhancing protection. Practical ways of addressing the behaviour of combatants in conflict and ending impunity must continue to be sought.

Humanitarian access

41. Allowing safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian relief for civilians in need is an obligation under international humanitarian law and a fundamental prerequisite for effective humanitarian action. The failure of parties to conflict to uphold their obligation to allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded access deprived people of survival essentials. The arbitrary withholding of consent, bureaucratic impediments, restriction of movement, interference, border closures and violence against humanitarian personnel and assets continue to be reported. The politicization of humanitarian access in several contexts also adversely affects efforts to protect and assist those in need.

Protecting humanitarian workers

42. Reports of humanitarian workers being attacked, harassed, intimidated or arbitrarily detained have become common. As front-line responders, national actors continue to be those most exposed to violence and account for 90 per cent of the humanitarian staff killed in 2017.

43. Enhancing the safety of humanitarian workers is achieved by building the acceptance by parties to conflict of humanitarian organizations; prioritizing the duty of care for humanitarian personnel, with particular attention to national staff, volunteers and partners; ensuring flexible funding to enable partners to adapt activities as required by circumstances; factoring partners' security needs into proposals and budgets; and taking concrete measures to protect humanitarian action from political interference.

Protecting medical care in conflict

44. The World Health Organization reported 322 attacks on health-care facilities in 20 countries during the reporting period. Beyond the destruction of medical facilities, which has devastating long-term effects on entire communities, and the killing and maiming of patients and medical personnel, access to medical care in armed conflict is hampered by legal and other threats, including the looting of medical supplies and denial of access for aid convoys.

45. Following the adoption of Security Council resolution 2286 (2016), some parties to armed conflict have established mechanisms for regular engagement with the national medical sector and non-governmental organizations to share information and discuss deconfliction arrangements. In October, 13 Member States adopted a political declaration expressing support for the recommendations prepared in response to the resolution.

Impact of urban warfare

46. War has increasingly been fought in urban areas, affecting an estimated 50 million people in cities and towns worldwide. Urban warfare is particularly devastating for civilians when it involves the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects and leaves behind explosive remnants of war. Civilian harm can be significantly reduced by avoiding the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas and adopting strong policies and practices.

Adverse consequences of counter-terrorism measures

47. Counter-terrorism measures continue to have an adverse impact on humanitarian action, ranging from lengthy administrative processes or funding drops to legislation that criminalizes activities necessary to provide impartial medical care or conduct principled humanitarian relief operations. Such legislation can contradict international obligations and undermine the very idea of impartial medical care or principled humanitarian action. Complex regulatory norms, coupled with heavy penalties and reputational risks, continue to generate reluctance in the financial sector to provide services for humanitarian operations in countries where groups appearing on terrorist lists are based.

B. Centrality of protection

Protection in humanitarian response

48. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) provided multifaceted tools to better reflect humanitarian protection across operations and support collective analysis and response. The Global Protection Cluster launched a Protection Mainstreaming Toolkit that assists humanitarian actors in incorporating protection into their operations, while the protection information management initiative provides practical guidance to strengthen information-sharing and analysis. Support from Protection Standby Capacity and Gender Standby Capacity projects was provided to more than 20 field locations. Humanitarian country teams continued to develop protection strategies, however, the limits of humanitarian response in the face of ongoing violations and abuses by parties to conflict remained stark in many contexts. While humanitarian actors play an important protection role, they cannot replace Member States and parties to conflict as the primary duty bearers.

Child protection

49. The protection of children is a critical part of humanitarian assistance and protection efforts. Child protection strategies include working with communities to identify the risk scenarios for girls and boys with a view to reinforcing community-based protection strategies; working with armed groups to ensure compliance with international law; carrying out programmes focused on reuniting children with families; and investing in schools and child- and adolescent-friendly environments to uphold the rights of children and reduce the risk of trafficking and exploitation. Scaled-up investments in vital child protection services and local coordination mechanisms are essential.

Sexual and gender-based violence

50. While women and girls continue to be disproportionally affected by sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, sexual slavery and trafficking, men and boys are also vulnerable to such violence, particularly in the context of detention or displacement. Humanitarian organizations stepped up their efforts to address gender-based violence in emergencies. The Global Protection Cluster and experts on gender-based violence worked to better integrate approaches to such violence in humanitarian response plans, and the Global Shelter Cluster piloted tools and guidelines to reduce gender-based violence in shelter-related programming. Nearly 3,000 humanitarian practitioners across 14 sectors and subsectors in 23 countries were trained by the gender-based violence guidelines implementation support team on risk mitigation. Furthermore, the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies, a multi-stakeholder initiative, continues to bring attention and mobilize action.

Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse

51. An update was provided in the recent report of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (A/72/751 and Corr.1) on the implementation of a new strategic approach, driven by the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. The Victims' Rights Advocate was appointed to prioritize the rights and dignity of victims and improve transparency.

52. IASC is complementing the work of the system-wide working group on sexual exploitation and abuse and the Office of the Special Coordinator by delivering training, supporting action plans and providing operational guidance to relevant networks and humanitarian country teams. The IASC Task Team on Accountability to Affected Populations and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse is providing technical support to country teams, and prevention and response are being scaled up in high-risk countries, including through the provision of child-sensitive assistance to victims of exploitation and abuse. Yet more efforts are needed to prevent exploitation and abuse, support survivors and hold perpetrators to account. The United Nations has a responsibility to set and carry out a global standard for preventing, responding to and eradicating this scourge and addressing its impact effectively, humanely and justly.

C. Reducing displacement

Forced displacement

53. Internally displaced people constitute the overwhelming majority of those forcibly displaced. They are among the most vulnerable members of any society. The General Assembly, in its resolution 72/182, underlined the urgent need to strengthen the protection of and assistance to internally displaced people and to prevent and reduce such displacement; called upon Member States and the United Nations system to explore ways to better address the long-term needs of internally displaced persons and to support host communities, including through increased humanitarian and development collaboration towards achieving durable solutions; and encouraged stakeholders to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, in 2018, to strengthen collaboration and address the challenges of internal displacement.

54. Efforts by IASC are aimed at strengthening the response to internal displacement. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees finalized an internal review to ensure a more effective response and is taking forward its recommendations. The International Organization for Migration adopted a Framework for Addressing Internal Displacement to ensure a comprehensive and collaborative approach and enhance operational effectiveness. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs encouraged concerned Governments, humanitarian and development partners and donors to work together more closely to reduce vulnerabilities and foster durable solutions for internally displaced persons and host communities in protracted situations. It also presented practical recommendations and invited concerned Governments and their partners to define collective outcomes, to integrate the needs of internally displaced persons into national policies and development plans, to strengthen humanitarian-development linkages and to ensure multi-year financing.[6] By the end of 2017, work was ongoing in several countries to take those recommendations forward.

55. The first full year for the application of the comprehensive refugee response framework, the new, globally agreed approach to addressing large movements of refugees and protracted refugee situations, was 2017. By the end of the year, the framework had been applied in 13 countries and in 2 regional contexts. With a focus on the resilience of refugees and host communities, the framework has helped to strengthen closer and more complementary cooperation between humanitarian and development actors and financial institutions, including the World Bank. Meanwhile, several States have taken significant action to adopt more inclusive laws or policies, for example in the areas of education, health care, livelihoods and civil documentation.

56. In the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (see General Assembly resolution 71/1), Member States committed themselves to adopting a global compact on refugees by the end of 2018, building on the practical application of the comprehensive refugee response framework and a series of discussions with Member States.

[6] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Breaking the Impasse: Reducing Protracted Internal Displacement as a Collective Outcome*.

Migrants in vulnerable situations

57. Some 5,375 migrants died along migratory routes worldwide in 2017. Too often migrants caught in humanitarian crises face overwhelming risks, including loss of life, physical and sexual violence, exploitation, trafficking, abduction, extortion and lack of access to services. Xenophobic political narratives about migration are widespread today. The global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration offers an opportunity to reinforce needed action.

58. Meeting the needs of migrants in humanitarian crises requires tailored humanitarian and protection assistance. Humanitarian partners sought to improve the ability of national and local authorities and international and regional organizations to address the needs of migrants before, during and after emergencies, including through the roll-out of the guidelines of the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative.

D. Advancing humanitarian and development collaboration

59. The multidimensional and complex nature of major crises point to the necessity for closer humanitarian and development collaboration. Such collaboration helps to bridge the gap between emergency relief and development aid and enables a shift from meeting immediate humanitarian needs to reducing the risks, vulnerability and needs of the populations affected. Stronger and more effective humanitarian and development collaboration will contribute to prevention, resilience and capacity-building and to sustaining peace, in line with the ongoing reforms of the United Nations. In this regard, momentum towards operationalizing the new way of working across humanitarian and development activities, with a focus on improving collective outcomes at the country level, is critical. It is important that humanitarian assistance be provided in a way that contributes to better development outcomes, whereas development action must focus more on reducing risk and vulnerability.

60. To enhance collaboration, the Secretary-General created a Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Cooperation. Chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, the Committee brings together high-level representatives of United Nations entities and departments, as well as the World Bank, to resolve operational, institutional and systemic barriers and provide strategic advice, support and solutions to, among others, resident coordinators and humanitarian coordinators.

61. Advancing humanitarian and development collaboration in the delivery of collective outcomes over multiple years is a task that goes beyond the United Nations, requiring the participation of diverse actors, including Governments, civil society, the private sector and international financial institutions.

62. Operationally, partners in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Mauritania and Somalia are already developing innovative and context-specific models for strengthening humanitarian and development collaboration towards collective outcomes. Lessons learned and best practices from the field are being brought to the attention of the Joint Steering Committee and will inform future context-specific and people-centred humanitarian and development activities.

63. Ultimately, however, no progress will be made unless planning and programming are designed and sustainably financed not only to meet immediate humanitarian needs, but also with a view to investing in long-term solutions for inclusive and sustainable development. Therefore, advocacy with bilateral donors and

international financial institutions to invest in joint risk analysis, joint planning and programming towards collective outcomes is a priority.

E. Famine and severe food insecurity

Prevention of and response to famine

64. Following the Secretary-General's urgent call to action in February 2017 to respond to famine in parts of Unity State, South Sudan, and to the risk of famine across north-eastern Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen, the United Nations prioritized its response and appealed for $4.9 billion. Some 20 million people, including 1.4 million severely malnourished children, were at risk of famine. The United Nations, its partners and donors quickly released funds and scaled up life-saving operations in all four countries. The Secretary-General also launched a working group on the prevention of famine, comprising high-level representatives of relevant United Nations agencies.

65. The Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based pooled funds released $379 million in coordinated allocations to scale up humanitarian action in those four countries in the first half of 2017. The World Bank provided $1.8 billion through a famine response initiative aimed at building social protection systems, strengthening resilience and maintaining service delivery.

66. By August, the United Nations and its partners were providing food assistance to nearly 13 million people a month in the four countries. Moreover, nutrition assistance reached more than 2.5 million women and children in July. During the year, 11.9 million people were provided with safe water, 6.7 million children were vaccinated against measles and more than 9 million people received agricultural livelihood support.

67. The rapid integrated response meant that the spread of famine was averted in 2017, but humanitarian needs remain alarmingly high, in some cases higher than when the call to action was launched. Protracted conflict continues to be the principal driver of such crises. Humanitarian access is severely restricted in all four countries, and the operating environments are daunting for civilians and aid workers alike. Based on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, which is a framework for analysing food insecurity, greater action is urgently needed to address the growing number of people in phases 3 (crisis) and 4 (emergency), not only in those four countries, but also in other countries facing severe food insecurity and undernutrition.

Severe food insecurity

68. While climatic conditions have fostered food insecurity, conflict is also a key factor contributing to the rise in hunger. Civilians caught in conflict often have no access to food and basic services, and markets are often disrupted, limiting their ability to support livelihood or commercial activities. Furthermore, parties to conflict have deliberately exacerbated hunger by violating rules under international humanitarian law that are designed to protect food sources and access to them, including by using starvation as a method of war and impeding relief operations.

69. In addition, drought and the residual effects of the El Niño/La Niña phenomenon, exacerbated by climate change, contribute to water scarcity, loss of land and loss of livelihoods, markets and community economies. The rise in acute hunger globally reflects a continued underinvestment in agriculture and livelihoods. Investing in risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection systems, protecting

livelihoods and providing emergency agriculture support are crucial in saving lives. Development actors need to play a critical role in early and concerted efforts to reinforce resilience before humanitarian crises occur and to engage earlier, be more risk-tolerant and implement more flexible and context-adaptable programming in crisis contexts.

IV. Developments in operations and coordination in 2017

A. Improving humanitarian coordination and response

Coordinated needs assessments and joint analysis

70. The increased use of coordinated multisectoral needs assessments, strategic approaches to data collection and analysis, and joint intersectoral analysis are laying the foundation for a more coherent and efficient response. The increased use of interoperable data is supporting further innovation and collaboration. Inter-agency humanitarian evaluations continue to enhance the accountability and transparency of humanitarian action.

Cash-based transfers

71. Cash-based transfers, including multipurpose or unrestricted cash used as a modality for delivering assistance, can provide people in emergencies with a flexible and dignified way to make choices on the goods and services they need most. As cash-based initiatives can generate a broad range of positive social and economic benefits, several agencies have scaled up the use of cashed-based assistance. The Global Cluster coordinators' group task team on cash is developing guidance on improving the coordination of cash assistance, including the use of multipurpose cash across clusters. Donors and humanitarian organizations should continue their efforts to scale up cash-based programming where contextually appropriate.

Social protection programming

72. Risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection systems can serve both short- and long-term objectives by serving as a scalable mechanism for emergency aid delivery and by building resilience. United Nations agencies and the World Bank worked with Governments and partners to improve the shock responsiveness of social protection systems. Humanitarian responses should make use of relevant social protection systems wherever appropriate and feasible and work to build their capacity.

B. Disaster risk reduction and preparedness

73. A shift from managing crises to managing risk is critical. Measures were taken during the year to improve overall preparedness for disasters. The Capacity for Disaster Risk Reduction Initiative delivered capacity-development services in seven countries. The Global Preparedness Partnership was also operationalized, with the first round of applications opened for strengthening preparedness capacities in 15 countries. A multi-partner trust fund was established to support this work. By early 2018, the IASC emergency response preparedness approach, which aims to increase the delivery of life-saving assistance in the first six weeks of an emergency, was being implemented in 70 countries.

74. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, at its fifth session, held in Cancun, Mexico, from 24 to 26 May, made important progress, including identifying elements to enhance risk-informed disaster preparedness and recovery plans and highlighting the importance of integrating provisions for reducing displacement risk, addressing the protection needs of displaced people and promoting durable solutions in disaster risk reduction strategies. In addition, IASC worked on standard operating procedures to catalyse early warning and action for extreme weather events related to the El Niño Southern Oscillation, building on the "blueprint for action" prepared by the Special Envoys of the Secretary-General on El Niño and Climate.

75. The year 2017 marked 10 years since the adoption of the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance, which help Governments to prepare for common legal problems in international response operations. Thirty countries have adopted legal instruments to better prepare for international response operations, with the support of national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

Regional organizations and the private sector

76. The United Nations worked with regional organizations to improve, prepare for and respond to crises, including by entering into a partnership with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency and Management Agency to streamline response operations in the Caribbean and by working with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on disaster management and with the African Union in support of field missions.

77. The Global Crisis Centre Network, established as a community of practice for national and regional crisis centres, supports the exchange and analysis of information among international actors after sudden-onset disasters. The Network developed draft standard operating procedures in 2017.

78. The Connecting Business Initiative has supported 13 business networks in disaster-prone countries in promoting preparedness, response and early recovery. Eight networks responded to disasters during the year. The United Nations Global Compact launched the Business for Humanitarian Action platform to better support humanitarian action.

C. Data

79. Efforts continued during the year to improve access to reliable, timely data through continuous monitoring of needs and response, which is critical for evidence-based humanitarian action. The Secretary-General launched the Centre for Humanitarian Data in The Hague, the Netherlands, in December to increase the impact of data and its use to inform evidence-based humanitarian action. The Index for Risk Management initiative continued to support countries and organizations in the development of shared open-source risk analysis.

D. Localization

Capacity-building of, coordination with and financing of local and national organizations

80. Reinforcing, rather than replacing, local response efforts and capacity is important. National and local actors are often the first to respond to a crisis and they remain in the communities they serve. The World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 and 24 May 2016, energized a dialogue on localization and led to more than 1,000 commitments and numerous initiatives. The Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing, the Charter for Change and other initiatives set targets that mobilized the humanitarian community around localization. International organizations and donors are providing more funding directly or through pooled funds to local partners and are investing in their capacity. Some donors are providing capacity-building or core funding to local and national actors, some international non-governmental organizations are sharing core costs with partners and more collaborative partnership approaches are being implemented. These funding and partnership models need to be applied and scaled up more systematically.

Emergencies in urban areas

81. It is projected that by 2030 there will be 870 million more urban residents. Intensified efforts to address the needs of urban residents affected by crisis are needed, including through the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Opportunities for engagement will be identified and local solutions developed jointly with local communities and authorities to increase the sustainability of interventions and improve aid delivery through the use of existing service delivery mechanisms. The City Resilience Profiling Tool of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme is a tool for self-assessment that helps local governments and stakeholders to improve cities' capacity to absorb and rebound quickly to shocks or stresses. The Clobal Alliance for Urban Crises connects more than 65 humanitarian and development organizations, networks of municipal authorities and professional institutes to better address risks in urban contexts, including by developing shared assessment and profiling tools.

E. Empowering and protecting women and girls

Gender equality and women's empowerment

82. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by crises. Thus, addressing the differing needs, priorities and capacities of women, girls, boys and men and promoting gender equality is critical in humanitarian action. The IASC Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action, revised in December, will strengthen humanitarian efforts on the ground. The IASC Gender Standby Capacity has been providing strategic and technical advice on gender mainstreaming and gender equality programming support to humanitarian country teams. Shifting from policy to practice requires more predictable funding for programmes that target women and girls, the systematic use of data disaggregated by sex and age and gender analysis. Recent advances in normative frameworks must also be matched by strong practical implementation and improved accountability.

Sexual and reproductive health

83. Over 60 per cent of maternal deaths and 45 per cent of newborn deaths worldwide occurred in fragile countries and countries affected by humanitarian crises. As a priority response within the first 48 hours of the onset of an emergency, the Minimum Initial Service Package provides a set of life-saving interventions, focusing on preventing maternal mortality and morbidity and planning for comprehensive reproductive health services when the situation permits. Recognizing the importance of sexual and reproductive health services in emergency settings, 39 countries have made the service package part of their national humanitarian preparedness and response plans. It is important that sexual and reproductive health services be prioritized and adequately funded in emergency settings.

F. Accountability and inclusion

Accountability to affected people

84. People in crisis are the central actors in building their own resilience. During the year, IASC principals endorsed the revised commitments on accountability to affected populations with a view to enforcing, institutionalizing and integrating accountability commitments so as to develop relevant systems at the country level. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs worked with partners to increase the percentage of humanitarian needs overviews and humanitarian response plans that include coordinated accountability mechanisms.

Advancing the inclusion of persons with disabilities

85. The Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action gained momentum and has been endorsed by more than 180 stakeholders, including 24 countries. Guidelines are being developed by IASC to assist humanitarian actors, Governments and affected communities in the full and effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities, including children. Finalizing and implementing the guidelines, improving data collection and monitoring tools and strengthening the capacity of organizations for disabled persons will be important.

Advancing the role of youth

86. Advancing the role of youth in humanitarian action is important, as young people can be strong drivers of resilience and agents of change. The Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, with 53 members, is a global call to safeguard the rights of young people affected by humanitarian crises and to engage them in response efforts. Work is under way to develop inter-agency guidelines for programming with and for youth in humanitarian settings. Furthermore partners, including regional and national disaster coordinating bodies, worked with youth to build and utilize their emergency response skills.

Ensuring education for all in crises

87. The goal of providing education in emergencies benefited from strong advocacy and coordination across core partnerships, including the IASC Education Cluster, the Global Partnership for Education and the Education Cannot Wait initiative. Endorsed by more than 70 countries, the Safe Schools Declaration reflects an important political commitment to reduce the impact of conflict on education. From 2007 to 2016, only 4.6 per cent of emergency appeal requests were allocated to education. To reach the

263 million children and youth who remain out of school in humanitarian settings, higher levels of funding are needed at an early stage of a crisis.

G. Humanitarian financing

Optimizing existing financing tools

88. The Central Emergency Response Fund is a critical enabler of immediate, effective and coordinated humanitarian action. In 2017, the Fund allocated $275 million in rapid response grants and $145 million in underfunded emergency grants to 36 countries, ensuring indispensable life-saving support. Donors contributed the highest-ever level of annual funding, with $514 million in voluntary contributions. Recognizing the Fund's essential role, the General Assembly endorsed its expansion to $1 billion (resolution 71/127). This will bolster global unearmarked contingency financing for shocks and underfunded crises and enable the Fund to continue meeting its life-saving mandate.

89. Country-based pooled funds were channelled to more than 640 humanitarian organizations for 18 of the world's most dire humanitarian crises. In 2017, a record amount of $824 million was provided by donors. Some 24 per cent of the funds, a 6 per cent increase from 2016, was allocated directly to local and national responders. Given their effectiveness, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and donors aim to increase the size of country-based pooled funds to 15 per cent of the funding requirements of the country humanitarian response plans. The Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based pooled funds also strengthened their complementarity so as to leverage comparative advantages and maximize impact.

Innovative financing

90. The need to move beyond an appeal-based funding approach towards a financing strategy that would include a wider group of financing actors (i.e. United Nations entities, bilateral donors, multilateral development banks and private sector entities) was recognized. The initial resources invested in humanitarian crises have a longer-term impact on development when strategically leveraged with additional financing mechanisms and aligned with collective outcomes. This includes more risk-informed development financing, the eighteenth replenishment of International Development Association disbursements and financing for prevention.

91. Several innovative humanitarian financing mechanisms are being used to quickly mobilize financing and ensure a rapid response. Forecast-based financing has been used by the World Food Programme, IFRC and other partners to promote early action. IFRC established a forecast-based financing window of the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund to enable access to funding for early action. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations used early warning information and a new flexible funding mechanism to prompt early action in the Horn of Africa to ease the impact of drought on pastoralists and provide vulnerable families with livestock feed, water and veterinary treatment. Others, such as African Risk Capacity, are investing in weather-related risk insurance.

H. Health emergencies

92. IASC, building on lessons learned from previous health emergencies, adopted system-wide activation procedures for infectious diseases and tested the new protocol in a simulation in December.

93. Cholera and acute watery diarrhoea affected multiple countries. In response to an unprecedented cholera outbreak in Yemen, humanitarian partners built 234 diarrhoea treatment centres and 1,084 oral rehydration corners and disseminated cholera prevention messages to more than 17 million people. Humanitarian partners also responded to outbreaks of yellow fever in parts of South America, Asia and Africa, Ebola virus in Central Africa, Lassa fever in West Africa, Marburg virus in the Horn of Africa, monkeypox in Central and West Africa and the plague in Madagascar. Diphtheria resurfaced in multiple countries, and the lack of global stocks of antitoxin is of concern. In Ukraine, low immunization rates and the expansion of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis and HIV epidemics are of concern.

I. Strengthening human resources capacity

94. The system-wide strategy of the Secretary-General on gender parity has the goal of not only reaching targets, but also of creating a working environment that embraces quality, eradicates bias and is inclusive of all staff. The implementation of the gender parity strategy is also expected to further geographic diversity. The twin goals of parity and diversity are mutually reinforcing. As part of the Secretariat, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is committed to attracting and retaining diverse talent in a workplace that embraces equality and diversity and complies with United Nations regulations and policies. Under its new "people strategy", developed in 2017, the Office will set and monitor gender parity and geographic diversity targets and engage in outreach to ensure greater diversity among the pool of applicants, including national staff.

95. Various humanitarian agencies of the United Nations system also made strides in this area during the year. The International Organization for Migration is developing a diversity and inclusion workplan and is undertaking training, leadership and mentoring programmes to support diversity and inclusion. The United Nations Children's Fund is reinforcing its efforts to achieve gender and geographic balance in appointments at all levels. The World Food Programme is undertaking a gender analysis to identify underrepresented areas and obstacles in attracting female staff.

J. Improving coordination with volunteering organizations

96. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/105, an update is hereby provided on collaboration between the White Helmets, an initiative of the Government of Argentina, and the United Nations. Since 1994, more than 700 White Helmets volunteers have provided assistance in 71 countries and undertaken 291 international humanitarian missions, many in coordination with the United Nations, and strengthened links with United Nations system agencies through agreements, joint workplans, financial support and field missions. Highlights included response and reconstruction work following hurricanes, floods and earthquakes in Latin America and the Caribbean and missions focused on building resilience in drought-affected areas.

V. Recommendations

97. On the basis of the foregoing, the Secretary-General recommends the following:

(a) Member States, non-State armed groups and humanitarian organizations should intensify their efforts to promote and ensure full respect for and adherence to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence;

(b) The United Nations, its Member States and all parties to armed conflict should urgently take all measures necessary to promote and ensure respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, ensure the protection of civilians and ensure accountability for perpetrators of serious violations, at the national or international level, as appropriate, including by bringing to justice perpetrators of violations and abuses perpetrated against children;

(c) Member States and non-State armed groups should allow and facilitate the rapid and unimpeded access of impartial humanitarian relief workers, expedite procedures for the entry and deployment of humanitarian personnel, goods and services and ensure that such procedures are clear and simple;

(d) Member States and non-State armed groups should respect and protect humanitarian workers and assets, including by refraining from directing attacks against them and taking constant care to spare them from the effects of military operations, and Member States should take all measures necessary to ensure that their domestic laws guarantee respect for and protection of humanitarian workers and assets;

(e) Member States and parties to conflict should adopt and implement practical measures to protect humanitarian and medical missions, such as those defined in the recommendations made pursuant to Security Council resolution 2286 (2016), and share best practices and lessons learned;

(f) Member States and non-State armed groups should respect the civilian character of schools and other educational institutions and refrain from undertaking actions that could adversely affect the protection of education facilities against direct attacks and should strongly condemn all attacks and threats of attack against schools perpetrated in contravention of international humanitarian law;

(g) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should continue to place protection at the centre of humanitarian action, maximize protection outcomes and promote safety and dignity in humanitarian response;

(h) The United Nations and humanitarian organizations must fully implement the United Nations policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse and ensure that victims have adequate protection, appropriate assistance and reliable recourse to justice, and Member States and the United Nations should ensure that perpetrators are held accountable;

(i) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should increase their investments and efforts to ensure that sexual and gender-based violence prevention services are in place from the onset of an emergency and that survivors have immediate access to those critical services and tools to

assist them in their recovery, and should systematically integrate prevention, risk mitigation and response in humanitarian response plans and strengthen data collection and monitoring systems;

(j) Member States should ensure that counter-terrorism measures do not impede principled humanitarian action, for example through general, standing humanitarian exemptions in sanctions regimes and national legislation;

(k) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian and development organizations should prevent and measurably reduce internal displacement in a safe and dignified manner, develop and implement effective strategies to ensure comprehensive protection and assistance for the displaced, support the early self-sufficiency of internally displaced people, work towards durable solutions, improve data collection and analysis and raise awareness of the situation of displaced people, particularly in view of the twentieth anniversary, in 2018, of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement;

(l) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should recognize local capacities and remove barriers that hinder collaboration among international, national, local and regional actors with a view to reinforcing and not replacing the capacities of local actors and institutions;

(m) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should promote and fund community engagement approaches in order that communities may receive timely information and have access to complaint and feedback mechanisms;

(n) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should provide the human and financial resources necessary to deliver programmes responsive to the different and context-specific needs of affected people, including by ensuring the systematic collection, analysis and use of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability and by according priority to funding in the areas of gender equality, women's empowerment and the use of the IASC gender with age marker;

(o) Member States, the United Nations, humanitarian and development organizations and other relevant actors should intensify their efforts to respond to and prevent rising global food insecurity, especially for countries at risk of famine, including by enhancing humanitarian-development cooperation, investing in agriculture to protect livelihoods and food production, providing urgent and flexible funding, working to achieve collective outcomes for food security and nutrition and ensuring respect for international humanitarian law;

(p) Member States, the United Nations, humanitarian and development organizations and other relevant actors should ensure financing geared towards achieving collective outcomes and supporting humanitarian and development collaboration through joint analysis, joint planning and increased multi-year humanitarian financing;

(q) Member States and other relevant actors should fully fund humanitarian response plans and appeals, increase contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund with a view to reaching an annual funding level of $1 billion, including through new and additional funding sources, and increase contributions to humanitarian country-based pooled funds;

(r) Member States and humanitarian organizations should take forward commitments made and initiatives launched at the World Humanitarian Summit and voluntarily report on progress and best practices through the Platform for Action, Commitments and Transformation.

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Trends and progress in international development cooperation

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 61/16, 68/1, 70/192 and 70/299, the present report is submitted by the Secretary-General for consideration by the Development Cooperation Forum, in advance of its sixth biennial high-level meeting in New York on 21 and 22 May 2018. The Forum is mandated to review trends and progress in international development cooperation, engaging all stakeholders and encouraging coordination across diverse actors and activities. The present report presents data, information and analysis across six areas: the strategic role of development cooperation in building sustainable and inclusive societies; supporting national sustainable development strategies, particularly through national development cooperation policies; bridging capacity gaps and facilitating technology development and transfer; leveraging South-South and triangular cooperation; engaging the private sector; and getting better results through strengthening the multilayered monitoring and review of development cooperation.

* The present report was submitted fewer than 10 weeks in advance of the sixth biennial high-level meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum owing to a change to the meeting dates.

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I. Introduction

1. The Development Cooperation Forum provides a global, multi-stakeholder platform for policy dialogue on development cooperation for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building trust and leaving no one behind. The Forum reviews trends and progress in international development cooperation, encouraging coordination across diverse actors and activities. It emphasizes the sharing of knowledge and mutual learning for better results. Its outcomes include concrete guidance on development cooperation for policymakers and practitioners at all levels. It directly contributes to the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development.[1]

2. The Forum has helped shape the role of development cooperation in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since 2015, it has advanced a practical, holistic concept of development cooperation that encompasses financial resources, capacity-building, technology development and transfer, policy change and multi-stakeholder partnerships.[2] The conceptual framing produced by the Forum has gained wide recognition, stimulating more productive knowledge-sharing and learning and a stronger focus on results.

3. The Forum's high-level meeting in 2016 laid bare the new realities of development cooperation and stressed the need for radical changes in the way development actors think and act. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development integrates economic, social and environmental dimensions and addresses the drivers of poverty and vulnerability. Its ambition, universality and integrated nature have brought new thinking to the entire development cooperation architecture, including the United Nations system. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, with its multi-stakeholder framework to mobilize the means of implementation, has similarly spurred new thinking.

4. The present report offers data, information and analysis across six related areas, under the theme: "The strategic role of development cooperation in achieving the 2030 Agenda: building sustainable and inclusive societies". In that way, the report addresses the annual themes of the Economic and Social Council[3] and the high-level political forum on sustainable development.[4] It aims to inform their deliberations while providing the main substantive input to the 2018 Development Cooperation Forum.

[1] See General Assembly resolutions 61/16, 68/1, 70/192 and 70/299.

[2] See E/2016/65. See also José Antonio Alonso and Jonathan Glennie, "What is development cooperation?", DCF Policy Brief, No. 1 (New York, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, 2015). Available from www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/pdf15/2016_dcf_policy_brief_no.1.pdf.

[3] "From global to local: supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities".

[4] "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies".

5. The report draws on a two-year preparatory process of analytical work and outreach, expert meetings and events.[5] That includes the DCF Argentina High-level Symposium, organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the Government of Argentina as an informal preparatory event for the 2018 Forum and the 2019 High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation. The report also draws on input from Member States that participated in a survey exercise conducted by the Forum, which aims to capture the state of play with regard to the effectiveness of development cooperation on the ground.[6]

II. The strategic role of development cooperation in the 2030 Agenda: building sustainable and resilient societies

6. The 2016 Development Cooperation Forum called for putting into practice a transformative focus on sustainable development results, putting the "furthest behind first" and adapting institutions and policies to support priorities and systems in developing countries. The Forum also provided strong policy guidance regarding the role of development cooperation in supporting the poorest and most vulnerable countries and people. It highlighted, among other measures, the need to meet existing commitments to official development assistance (ODA), while improving its allocation and effective use.[7]

7. According to the latest report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, international public financing has increased since 2015, and efforts continue to increase its quality and effectiveness, including with regard to ODA lending by multilateral development banks and South-South cooperation.[8] The report also identified changing allocation patterns in the face of the challenging geopolitical environment, which included increased focus on climate challenges and humanitarian crises. Addressing those priorities is in full alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Further increases in quantity and quality are needed with regard to climate financing, humanitarian financing and disaster risk reduction financing. However, the allocation trends indicate the potential for development funding gaps in countries most in need of support and in areas critical to building sustainable and resilient societies. The present section considers those trends in order to identify how development cooperation must further orient itself to effectively

[5] Input was also provided by United Nations system entities, including the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Telecommunication Union, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the World Food Programme, as well as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Development Cooperation Forum Civil Society Organization Reference Group.

[6] An independent study on the survey findings and recommendations which will be available for the 2018 Forum. Responses come from 58 developing country governments and are anonymous. The present report draws on the preliminary findings.

[7] See E/2017/76.

[8] *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects — Report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development 2018* (United Nations publication, forthcoming). Available from https://developmentfinance.un.org/advance-unedited-version-2018-iatf-report. Figures for ODA for 2017 are not available at the time of writing.

support vulnerable countries and communities, as their development is crucial to the timely realization of the 2030 Agenda.

8. More ODA should be mobilized and targeted to countries that have the fewest resources and the weakest capacities, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ODA continues to play a distinct and vital role, especially in the most vulnerable countries.[9] The 10.7 per cent increase of ODA in real terms in 2016 amounted to $145.7 billion. Excluding in-donor refugee costs, ODA rose by 8.6 per cent in real terms.[10] Only six countries met or exceeded the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI); on average, donors of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) fell short of the target, providing 0.32 per cent. In 2016, countries met, on average, their Addis Ababa Action Agenda commitment to reverse the decline of ODA to least developed countries. In the medium term, however, the trend of ODA to least developed countries remained stagnant. In 2016, six donors provided 0.15 per cent of GNI as ODA to least developed countries; five of them exceeded the 0.20 per cent target. However, for nine members of the Development Assistance Committee, ODA to least developed countries decreased from 2015 to 2016. ODA to small island developing States increased significantly from $5.1 billion in 2015 to $7.1 billion in 2016, driven by the restructuring of the debt of Cuba by Spain.

9. Sectoral shifts in ODA allocation may have disproportionate effects on vulnerable population groups and countries, where funding of social programmes is dependent on ODA. While investments in economic sectors, humanitarian aid and in-donor refugee costs have risen steadily from 2010 to 2015, investments in social sectors have been on the decline.[11] For example, the Global Education Monitoring Report demonstrates insufficient targeting of ODA allocation to countries most in need of basic education, amid a decline in ODA to basic education spending since 2010. It suggests taking the out-of-school population as a rough proxy to estimate the financing needs, which would address the financing gap in basic education and better target ODA to those furthest behind.[12]

10. Development cooperation should further support the integration of gender equality concerns into national planning and budgetary processes. Gender-based discrimination hampers sustainable development and heightens countries' vulnerability to shocks. The adoption of "whole-of-government" approaches provides new impetus to mainstreaming gender equality in national development strategies and instruments and into all stages of policymaking, budgeting and service delivery cycles.

11. Countries need capacity support to better address the needs of vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples and those with disabilities, to secure their basic

[9] See José Antonio Alonso, "Development cooperation to ensure that none be left behind", in Committee for Development Policy, "Summaries and key messages of papers produced by the CDP sub-group on 'leaving no one behind'", CDP2018/PLEN/10, March 2018. Available from www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/CDP-2018-Summary-LNOB.pdf.

[10] For a civil society perspective, see Concord Europe, "Concord aid watch 2017: EU aid uncovered–how to reach the target on time" (Brussels, 2017). Available from https://concordeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CONCORD_AidWatch_Report_2017_web.pdf?1fdb40&1fdb40&7e2b17&7e2b17.

[11] OECD, *Development Cooperation Report 2017: Data for Development* (Paris, 2017). Available from www.oecd.org/dac/development-co-operation-report-20747721.htm.

[12] UNESCO, "Aid to education is stagnating and not going to countries most in need", Global Monitoring Report Policy Paper, No. 31 (Paris, 2017). Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002495/249568e.pdf.

human rights and ensure inclusive sustainable development. To that end, some partnerships among development cooperation agencies, the private sector, civil society and indigenous communities are proving effective, such as the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility, which is advancing the collective tenure of land and forests,[13] and the Spotlight Initiative of the European Union and the United Nations launched in September 2017, which focuses on implementing comprehensive programmes to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

12. Development cooperation needs to become "disaster-risk-informed" so that it is not lost to disasters and reduces rather than contributes to risks. The United Nations system committed itself to advancing harmonized application of risk and resilience across sustainable development, humanitarian, peace and security and human rights efforts with the development of an analytical framework on risk and resilience in 2017.[14] More systematic assessment of the use of disaster risk in development planning can help identify gaps; for example, the Development Assistance Committee of OECD has developed a marker for tracking disaster risk reduction mainstreaming in development cooperation, which will be implemented in 2019. Such assessments should also inform resource allocation among ex post assistance and ex ante instruments (such as insurance mechanisms and pooled funds) to increase the speed, efficiency and effectiveness of responses.

13. The contribution of development cooperation to climate action needs to be further strengthened and more deliberately targeted at those furthest behind. Climate change has a differentiated impact on countries and individuals: those furthest behind tend to be hardest hit, and women often suffer disproportionately.[15] The increased focus of climate financing on adaptation in 2017 is welcome.[16] Support to capacity-building provided to least developed countries and small island developing States needs to be stepped up to facilitate the preparation and submission of bankable proposals. In particular, least developed countries and other countries with special needs will require increased investment in "adaptive social safety nets" to strengthen the coping capacities of households and allow for better, more targeted responses to disasters.

14. Building resilience and sustainability requires well-tailored support, based on countries' needs. The 2018 report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development examines challenges related to graduation from concessional financing windows faced by least developed countries and many other small and vulnerable countries, including some that have relatively high levels of per capita income yet also have extreme vulnerability to external shocks. The report encourages additional flexibilities, building on existing exceptions made by the multilateral development banks, and calls more broadly for additional support to countries as they manage transitions between different sources of development finance.

15. Progress to strengthen country ownership and leadership and align support with country priorities must be secured and advanced. Recent years show a fall in country programmable aid, which is the share of ODA that countries can programme and over which recipients have a significant say. Less ODA is provided in the form of budget support or pooled funding and a greater proportion is now non-transfer ODA (e.g., the hosting and processing of refugees, administrative costs, humanitarian aid).[17]

[13] See http://thetenurefacility.org/about-us/advisory-group-members-2-2/.

[14] See CEB/2017/6.

[15] See CEDAW/C/GC/37 (forthcoming).

[16] Charlene Watson, Neil Bird and Liane Schalatek, "10 things to know about climate finance in 2017", December 2017. Available from www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12097.pdf.

[17] See *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects, 2018*.

Moreover, tied aid still makes up a significant share of bilateral aid.[18] The continued fragmentation of ODA is detrimental, impeding countries' long-term planning and programming, and should therefore be addressed.

16. Transformative and sustained progress for peoples, planet, prosperity and peace will require implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that works in tandem with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the New Urban Agenda. Development cooperation should continue to support developing countries by aligning the different context-specific agendas and programmes of action, as well as regional plans, with the 2030 Agenda, which will help to build synergies, reduce duplication of efforts, increase effectiveness and strengthen development impact. A prominent example of that is the provision of support to African countries regarding the integration of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 of the African Union into their national development frameworks. That was reinforced in January 2018 by the adoption of the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda to accelerate the integrated and coordinated implementation, monitoring and reporting of the two agendas through joint activities and programmes.[19]

Action points

- Close monitoring of current allocations trends is needed, as those trends indicate the potential for funding gaps in long-term development investment for countries in special situations and in areas critical to building inclusive, sustainable and resilient societies.
- Sectoral shifts in ODA allocation may have disproportionate effects on vulnerable countries and population groups and should likewise be closely monitored.
- Development cooperation should support whole-of-government approaches that integrate gender equality concerns more effectively into national planning and budgetary processes.
- Development cooperation needs to become more "disaster-risk-informed", supporting efforts to move from managing disasters to effectively managing and reducing risk and enhancing preparedness. That includes enhancing access to risk transfer mechanisms for vulnerable countries.
- The contribution of development cooperation to climate actions needs to be strengthened and targeted at those furthest behind, including through increased investment in adaptive social safety nets. Improved speed, predictability and accessibility of climate financing will help least developed countries and small island developing States in particular to better navigate that complex financing landscape. Increased capacity support is needed to facilitate the preparation and submission of bankable proposals for countries with special development needs.
- Building resilience and sustainability requires support that is well tailored to countries' development needs and additional support to vulnerable countries managing transitions between different sources of development financing.

[18] Polly Mecks, "Unravelling tied aid", European Network on Debt and Development. Available from aid www.eurodad.org/Files/pdf/1546810-unravelling-tied-aid-1516803666.pdf.

[19] Economic Commission for Africa, "United Nations-African Union leaders sign framework for implementation of Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", 27 January 2018. Available from www.uneca.org/stories/un-au-leaders-sign-framework-implementation-agenda-2063-and-2030-agenda-sustainable.

- More progress is needed in strengthening country ownership and alignment with country priorities, through various measures, including with regard to reversing the declining trends in country programmable aid and budget support, reducing tied aid and addressing the fragmentation of ODA.

III. Development cooperation to support national sustainable development strategies: the role of national development cooperation policies

17. The 2016 Development Cooperation Forum provided space to exchange knowledge, information and best practices among diverse development cooperation actors undertaking a range of policy and institutional reforms in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It stressed that those adaptation processes should also serve to enhance alignment of interventions with the development priorities of developing countries. The present section provides a concrete example of those processes, evaluating how developing countries are evolving their national development cooperation policies beyond ODA.

18. National development cooperation policies are a tool that developing countries use to mobilize and align international support with their sustainable development priorities. The national development cooperation policies of some countries also reflect their development cooperation with other developing countries. In support of the Sustainable Development Goals, such cooperation policies can provide a unified vision for development cooperation in its diverse forms: financial and non-financial, public and private. A national development cooperation policy may be a stand-alone document or part of a national action or development plan. The 2018 survey exercise conducted by the Forum, in which 58 developing countries participated, probed best practice and capacity development needs in the design, implementation and monitoring of national development cooperation policies, as well as other enablers for effective development cooperation.[20]

19. Developing countries are creating or adapting their national development cooperation policies to reflect the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Of the responding countries, 67 per cent had a cooperation policy in place. Countries lacking cooperation policies typically had a policy pending approval or planned to finalize one within 12 months (nine countries).[21] Of those countries that had both a national development cooperation policy and a national development strategy, 70 per cent reported that those policies were closely aligned. A total of 64 per cent stated that their national development cooperation policies addressed the 2030 Agenda; all remaining countries planned to adapt their policies accordingly.

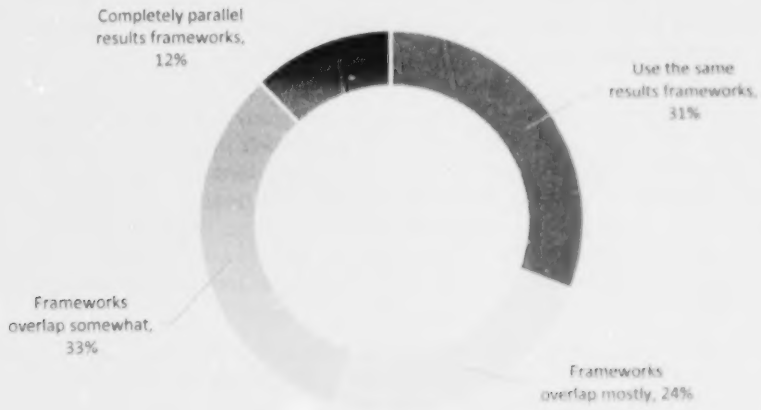
20. National development cooperation policies that clearly articulate priorities and targets can provide partners with a greater understanding of countries' needs and facilitate the use of country systems. At the level of development programmes and projects, country-led results frameworks should provide a central reference point between governments and their partners to ensure that development efforts are aligned with national development strategies. Countries need capacity in terms of systems, financing and human resources to design and promote the use of robust country results frameworks in which all partners can have confidence. Of the 39 countries that had national development cooperation policies, 69 per cent had provisions on the use of country results frameworks. Of those, 33 per cent of countries responded that their

[20] See sect. I.

[21] Only three countries reported lacking the capacity to develop a policy, while two countries report that there was no demand for such a policy.

development partners used somewhat overlapping results frameworks, and 12 per cent used completely parallel systems (see figure I).[22]

Figure I
Use of country-led results frameworks


Completely parallel results frameworks, 12%
Use the same results frameworks, 31%
Frameworks overlap somewhat, 33%
Frameworks overlap mostly, 24%

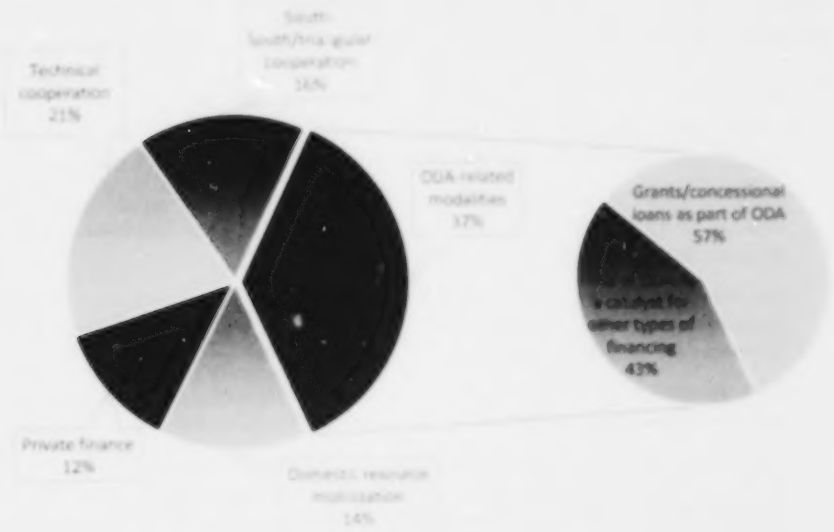
Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

21. The effectiveness of national development cooperation policies could be strengthened through the clear articulation of specific targets and mechanisms to monitor and evaluate progress in their implementation. Most developing countries responding to the survey felt the specific targets in their cooperation policies were relevant (82 per cent) and covered relevant sectors (62 per cent). Some 54 per cent saw them as quantifiable and measurable. The cooperation policies primarily contained targets for the government and its ministries (92 per cent) and all international development cooperation partners collectively (64 per cent), rather than individual partners (33 per cent). One third of countries reported having conducted an independent evaluation of their international development cooperation in the past year.

22. National development cooperation policies are increasingly going beyond ODA, and they should be further utilized to mobilize and align development cooperation with national priorities. Figure II shows the relative coverage of different modalities in national development cooperation policies. Of the respondents, 82 percent reported their cooperation policies addressed both grants/concessional loans (part of ODA) and technical cooperation and other capacity-building. On average, 64 per cent had provisions for South-South and triangular cooperation. Around 49 per cent of the cooperation policies addressed private finance, and 56 per cent addressed domestic resource mobilization strategies. National development cooperation policies should make clear linkages with domestic resource mobilization strategies. Where appropriate, they should provide a framework for context-specific plans to catalyse more private capital for sustainable development financing.

[22] See also the monitoring exercise of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, which considers 10 indicators to track progress, including the use of country-led results frameworks.

Figure II
Relative coverage of different modalities in national development cooperation policies


Technical cooperation 21%
ODA-related modalities 37%
Grants/concessional loans as part of ODA 57%
a catalyst for other types of financing 43%
Private finance 12%

Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Note: Respondents were able to select a number of different modalities covered in their national development cooperation policies. Countries that had a national development cooperation policy in place selected 154 modalities in total. Percentages refer to the proportion of those total selections by type of modality.

23. National development cooperation policies can give new impetus to efforts to improve policy coherence for development. Of the survey respondents, 62 per cent identified policy coherence as an important aspect of their cooperation policies. National development cooperation policies can help advance policy coherence for development with regard to donor policies that might conflict with development objectives. They increasingly embrace the vision of policy coherence for sustainable development of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls upon all countries to adopt policies that contribute to sustainable development in all its dimensions.

24. National development cooperation policies can support inclusive whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, including youth and marginalized groups, and create a vital role for parliamentarians. With regard to the design of national development cooperation policies, respondents reported mainly consulting government ministries (95 per cent), followed by international development cooperation partners (87 per cent) and non-governmental/civil society organizations (76 per cent). Some 55 per cent of cooperation policies require governments to submit a progress report to their respective parliaments on the implementation of the policies.

25. National development cooperation policies will serve as an important driver of a more tailored and effective response by the United Nations development system on the ground. The United Nations development system is repositioning itself to better align with and respond to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A key element is a revitalized, strategic and results-oriented United Nations Development Assistance Framework, aimed at better capturing national priorities and outlining a

clear United Nations response. National development cooperation policies can help countries elaborate their priorities and needs in terms of external support and calibrate a tailored system response through the United Nations country teams. An empowered and impartial resident coordinator can facilitate that process by working closely with national governments and benefiting from better support at the United Nations regional and global levels.

Action points

- Developing countries with national development cooperation policies should align them with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- National development cooperation policies should be used more to promote country leadership, the use of country results frameworks and inclusive whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches.
- Specific targets, respective responsibilities and the regular monitoring and evaluation of progress should be clearly articulated and anchored in national development cooperation policies.
- Parliamentarians should be better enabled to play their vital oversight role with regard to national development cooperation policies and related processes.
- National development cooperation policies should make clear linkages with domestic resource mobilization strategies. Where appropriate, they should provide a framework for context-specific plans to catalyse more private capital for sustainable development financing.

IV. Bridging capacity gaps and facilitating technology development and transfer

26. At the 2016 Development Cooperation Forum, developing countries identified large gaps in policy and institutional capacities in two areas in particular: domestic resource mobilization and data and statistics. Fast-tracking policy reforms in countries most in need requires an understanding of how the enabling international environment is shaping and responding to: (a) the adaptation of institutions and systems to respond to the Sustainable Development Goals; and (b) countries' specific policymaking and implementing capacities. The present section uses that perspective to look at the role of development cooperation with regard to bridging capacity gaps in revenue mobilization and data and statistics and facilitating technology development and transfer.

Domestic resource mobilization

27. Development partners should further increase their capacity support for domestic resource mobilization that focuses on countries with the greatest need. Countries have increased their funding in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and with the complementary, voluntary Addis Tax Initiative, which commits its members to doubling their support for tax capacity-building by 2020. ODA to domestic resource mobilization rose from $181 million, representing 0.15 per cent of ODA commitments by members of the Development Assistance Committee of OECD in 2015, to $288 million, or 0.23 per cent of commitments in 2016. However, those increases may not be sufficient and are concentrated in a few countries.[23] In many

[23] See *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects, 2018*. The large increase was predominantly the result of two very large projects initiated by a single donor.

countries, the support falls short of the revenue level needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

28. Capacity-building support needs to respond to countries' new demands, including those arising from more integrated approaches to financing for development. Countries need sustained support to put in place laws, policies and infrastructure for tax administration and to participate in international tax norms and tax transparency standards. Other areas of need include strengthening countries' capacities to assess the impact of tax policies on efforts to reduce inequalities and building tax capacities at the subnational level in response to decentralization. Movement towards integrated, whole-of-government approaches to revenue mobilization and broader public engagement in that area is creating new capacity-building demands, such as support for the development of medium-term revenue strategies.[24]

Data and statistics

29. Development cooperation should cover funding gaps in capacity support for the collection of statistics related to the Sustainable Development Goals in countries most in need, ensuring that priority statistical areas are addressed. To close the $685 million annual funding gap for such data collection in least developed countries, ODA will need to increase by $200 million annually.[25] The share of ODA that went to statistics dropped significantly from 2013 to 2015, from 0.39 to 0.30 per cent of total ODA.[26] The top five donors[27] provided 75 per cent of disbursements in 2015. Figure III shows the regionally heterogeneous allocation of ODA to statistics in different areas across regions. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, most ODA is spent on general statistical items and methodology (surveys and censuses). Across all regions, the least funding is provided for environment and multi-domain statistics, followed by income and poverty statistics. In terms of statistical sources, capacity needs remain greatest in the area of administrative data. In many developing countries, the capacities of national statistical offices remain low and are insufficiently supported by legislative mandates, creating bottlenecks in statistical systems.

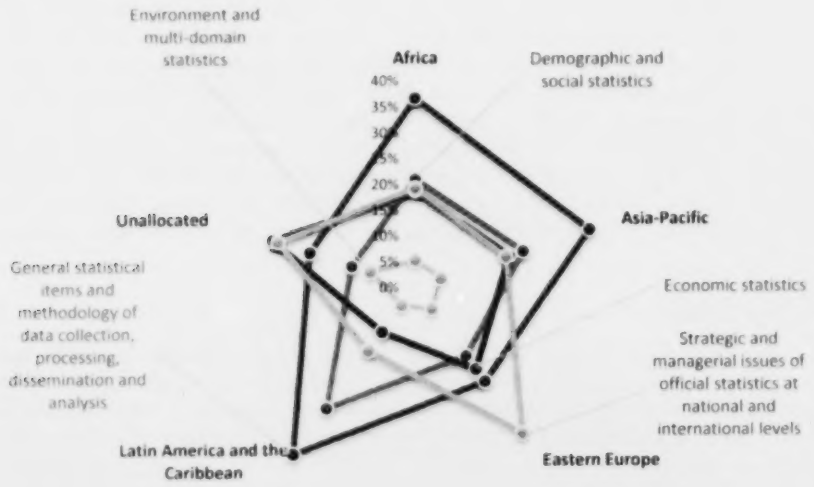
[24] To date, three countries have committed to developing medium-term revenue strategies. Such strategies are being stressed by the Platform for Collaboration on Tax (comprising the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and OECD) as a building block of integrated national financing frameworks.

[25] PARIS21, *Partner Report on Support to Statistics* (2017).

[26] A lower bound.

[27] Canada, the African Development Bank, the European Commission/Eurostat, the United Nations Population Fund and the World Bank.

Figure III
Percentage of allocation of official development assistance to statistics in different areas, by region, 2006–2015



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data supplied by PARIS21 (2017).
Note: "Unallocated" refers to disbursements that are not country-specific.

30. Development cooperation should support the transformations in national data infrastructure and larger data ecosystems that are needed to meet the demands of the Sustainable Development Goals. National strategies for the development of statistics should aim to systematically strengthen coordination, collaboration and capacity within national statistical systems. They should also support the engagement of a wider set of users and producers of data, beyond official sources. In that way, countries can efficiently integrate, for example, geospatial information and citizen-based and big data for use in monitoring development progress and targeting those furthest behind. The Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data provides a framework that engages governments, policy leaders and the international community to prioritize the needed modernization and strengthening of national statistical systems, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Science, technology and innovation

31. Capacity-building for science, technology and innovation helps to identify and scale up affordable solutions that are socially inclusive, environmentally friendly and address the needs of the poor. Countries with limited capacities, in particular, will need support to put in place broad-based, country-owned national science, technology and innovation strategies and policies. Initiatives such as the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries will make an important contribution to strengthening the science, technology and innovation capacities of the least developed countries. Multi-stakeholder global and regional platforms should be further utilized to share successful science, technology and innovation policies and strategies, explore new opportunities and promote coordination and collaboration. In addition to the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable

Development Goals at the global level, examples of other platforms include the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Plan of Action on Science, Technology and Innovation 2016–2020 and the Southern African Development Community's strategic framework on science, technology and innovation for 2015–2020, supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

32. The expansion of South-South and triangular cooperation in the science, technology and innovation realm creates new opportunities. South-South cooperation should build on its strengths in adapting appropriate, affordable technologies and solutions to local contexts, helping countries generate and sustain their own knowledge.[28] Priority attention must be given to the long-term sustainability of South-South science, technology and innovation initiatives, including through mobilizing resources, scaling up successful demand-driven initiatives and moving from projects to operations, within applicable legislative frameworks and capacities.

33. Successful science, technology and innovation policies rely on fully employing the talents of both women and men. To that end, UNESCO has developed a set of tools to monitor the progress of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Action points

- More capacity support for domestic resource mobilization is needed in countries furthest from nationally defined revenue levels to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and more attention should be paid to the subnational level.
- Development cooperation should respond to countries' moves to more integrated approaches in national budget and revenue strategies.
- More attention should be paid to strengthening the capacities of countries to assess the impact of different tax systems on efforts to reduce inequalities.
- Development cooperation should support countries with regard to putting in place broad-based, country-owned science, technology and innovation strategies and policies that include gender perspectives.
- South-South and triangular cooperation should be further deployed as frameworks for scaling up best practices and fostering the development, transfer and adaptation of affordable science, technology and innovation solutions.
- Development cooperation should be increased to target funding to countries that have the weakest capacities in statistics, ensuring attention to vital statistical areas.
- With regard to supporting national strategies for the development of statistics, the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data offers a framework for the much-needed modernization and strengthening of national statistical offices so they can reach the Sustainable Development Goals.

[28] United Nations, "South-South and triangular cooperation for achieving the 2030 Agenda: building innovative and inclusive partnerships", summary of the DCF Argentina High-level Symposium, Buenos Aires, September 2017. Available from www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/dcf/dcf-argentina-summary.pdf.

V. Leveraging South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development

34. The 2016 Development Cooperation Forum highlighted the role of South-South cooperation in reducing asymmetric access to development opportunities and responding directly to local demands. The present section identifies ongoing and innovative efforts to forge broad-based and structured South-South and triangular cooperation that supports sustainable development.[29]

35. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other major frameworks, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework, give new impetus to South-South and triangular cooperation. South-South cooperation continues to show steady expansion, diversification and resilience. Recent years have seen the emergence of new actors, more inclusive partnership arrangements and innovative modalities of development cooperation. Those changes are strengthening development efforts at all levels to combat poverty and hunger, address climate change, support infrastructure development and advance humanitarian assistance. There is a steady rise in inclusive, action-oriented policy dialogues at various levels. A growing number of Southern partners are designing systems and processes to assess the outcomes of their projects and programmes. Together, developing countries are giving heightened attention to the quality, effectiveness and contribution of their development cooperation to sustainable development.

36. The importance of South-South cooperation in localizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related agreements should be more widely recognized as a complement to North-South cooperation. South-South cooperation is not intended to substitute for North-South cooperation, which remains a vital form of support for developing countries, nor does the advance of South-South cooperation substitute for expedited progress in addressing systemic issues.

37. South-South cooperation reflects a plurality of approaches and diverse regional dynamics and perspectives. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs tracks development cooperation trends in South-South cooperation in part by considering official concessional resources (concessional loans and grants, debt relief and technical cooperation) provided by developing countries for development purposes.[30] That approach is in keeping with the conceptual framing of international development cooperation developed through the Development Cooperation Forum.

38. Generating estimates of South-South cooperation remains complex and challenging, given its emphasis on non-financial modalities and the lack of comparability in definitions and categories used for reporting. For example, country practices differ with regard to reporting indirect and direct costs of their projects, as do their methodologies of calculating the grant element in official loans. Estimates of development cooperation from academic institutions or international organizations can differ from those of official sources, especially as they apply common frameworks after the fact to data originally collected for other purposes. Moreover, non-financial modalities significant in South-South cooperation, including capacity-building, technology development and transfer, joint action for policy change and partnerships, are not easily quantifiable.

[29] The present section draws on input studies and policy briefs commissioned by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs from the Foro Nacional Internacional.

[30] Some Southern partners also consider non-concessional loans and commercial transactions in trade and investment as another distinct feature of their cooperation.

39. The proportion of developing countries providing development cooperation has increased from 63 to 74 per cent from 2015 to 2017, according to the 2017 survey of programme country governments conducted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Of the countries providing South-South cooperation, 84 per cent reported exchanging information on science, technology and innovation in 2017.[31] That trend shows the South-South and triangular landscape undergoing significant change, affecting not only the scope of development cooperation but the diversity of actors. Similarly, the survey showed a marked rise in the number of developing countries indicating that the United Nations had undertaken activities to support South-South or triangular cooperation in their country, from 54 per cent of countries in 2015 to 84 per cent in 2017.

40. The characteristics of South-South and triangular cooperation are influencing the larger development landscape, contributing to the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.[32] They are helping to promote the shift from a narrow focus on financing to a broader partnership dimension and the effective engagement of all stakeholders and means of implementation, stemming partly from their emphasis on non-financial cooperation. Progress in developing legal and institutional frameworks to foster effective multi-stakeholder approaches in South-South and triangular cooperation should be built upon.

41. Triangular cooperation initiatives integrate South-South principles into the project or programme design in tandem with emphasis on mutual learning, the provision of knowledge, the sharing of experiences and capacity-building.[33] In some cases, Southern partners are using triangular partnerships to facilitate the scaling up of their South-South cooperation. Innovative arrangements on that front are also emerging from the United Nations system. For instance, United Nations agencies based in Rome (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme) joined together to mainstream South-South and triangular cooperation through their road map launched at the Global South-South Development Expo 2017 in Antalya, Turkey. The road map foresees joint activities, annual reports, operational collaboration and joint knowledge management, assessment, research and the monitoring and evaluation of their South-South and triangular cooperation.

42. Multilateral development banks are making a clear impact on development cooperation in the South-South and triangular space.[34] Such banks are providing needed support to cross-border projects and initiatives that were often neglected owing to complexities and risks associated with joint repayments. They are actively engaged in dialogues to harmonize and make compatible development policies and institutional reforms, and are producing analytical and knowledge products that focus on developing country contexts and experiences. South-led multilateral development banks have also demonstrated innovative approaches to governance structures that may contribute to the effectiveness of development cooperation. For instance, both

[31] Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Report on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review monitory survey of programme country governments in 2017", final report. Available from www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2018doc/sgr2018-survey-report-pgc.pdf.

[32] See United Nations, "South-South and triangular cooperation for achieving the 2030 Agenda".

[33] Francisco Sagasti and others, "Promoting sustainable development through triangular cooperation", DCF Policy Brief, No. 19 (New York, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017). Available from www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/dcf/brief%20-203_Triangular_cooperation_final_01_09_17.pdf.

[34] Ibid., "Fostering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: the role of multilateral development banks in South-South cooperation", DCF Policy Brief, No. 18 (New York, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017). Available from www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/dcf/brief_2_MDBs_final_final_010917.pdf.

the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the New Development Bank have opted for streamlined operations through a non-resident board of directors, ensuring increased efficiency as loans are approved by management.

43. Developing countries are increasingly formalizing their collaborative arrangements and enhancing their institutional capacities to engage in development cooperation, and varying trends have been observed within and across regions. Institutions of South-South cooperation are proving instrumental with regard to developing critical capacities, formulating policies and strategic plans, coordinating national and international stakeholders, undertaking analytical and assessment work and disseminating development cooperation data and information. Existing agencies are evolving and being reinforced, and new agencies are being established. Most recently, the Government of China announced plans to establish an agency for international development cooperation in order to consolidate development policies, coordination and operations.

44. Structured and vibrant forms of development cooperation are emerging through interregional development cooperation mechanisms and frameworks. The arrangements provide high-level platforms for knowledge-sharing and mutual learning among Southern partners, involving both State and non-State actors, including parliamentarians, representatives of civil society, local authorities, women and youth, as well as representatives of the private sector. The arrangements can facilitate the formulation of coherent development strategies and cost-effective interventions, often covering many countries, and the related summits are increasingly becoming major avenues for the pledging of resources, the coordination of policies and the launching of major joint initiatives.[35]

Action points

- Raising the visibility of South-South and triangular cooperation and further analysing their added value and long-term impact on sustainable development would support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- South-South cooperation needs to further develop its institutions and exchanges while preserving its strategic focus on promoting autonomy, resilience and structural change. National and regional experiences can be further codified and systematized and mainstreamed into national development plans.
- Multilateral development banks can and should play a greater role in supporting knowledge-sharing and knowledge-management networks for sustainable development in the South-South space.
- Upcoming high-level meetings on South-South and triangular cooperation can be used to advance broad-based, inclusive and structured cooperation that is effective and aligned with national development plans, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other major global development frameworks.
- More exchanges are needed regarding ways to leverage the comparative advantages of different stakeholders in South-South and triangular cooperation and develop policy and legal frameworks applicable to them at the local, national, regional and global levels.

[35] Upcoming summits include the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the India-Africa Forum Summit, the BRICS Summit, which comprises Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa, and the ISBA Summit, which comprises India, Brazil and South Africa.

VI. Engaging the private sector in development cooperation

45. The 2016 Development Cooperation Forum emphasized improving the evidence base with regard to engaging the private sector in development cooperation in order to bring a step change in knowledge-sharing, learning and building trust in that area. The present section looks at opportunities and challenges in the specific area of blended finance.

46. Development cooperation shows increasing attention to crowding in, leveraging or catalysing additional private financing in an effort to close the large gap in infrastructure financing relating to the Sustainable Development Goals. Blended finance has much potential to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, questions remain regarding the appropriate use for and structuring of blended instruments and the implications for their development impact. The private sector may lack the incentives to secure accessibility to and enhance the affordability of services, and may not adequately consider social and environmental costs and benefits and human rights obligations.[36] Depending on the circumstances, other financing arrangements, including public finance, might be more cost effective and sustainable, especially in sectors or areas where equity considerations are prevalent.

47. Developing countries must play a central role in decisions regarding the use of ODA for blending finance for development in order to ensure alignment with their priorities and strong country ownership, backed by broad-based participation. That is especially important now, as current trends point to the possible risk that increased reliance on blended financing may divert concessional funding from those social sectors and countries that are lagging most behind. Blended facilities and funds have primarily targeted sectors that have a clear business case. There is less targeting of social sectors or other areas where the alignment of public and private sectors is more difficult to achieve.[37] According to a survey conducted by OECD in 2016, only 7 per cent of private finance mobilized between 2012 and 2015 as a result of official development finance interventions went to projects in least developed countries.[38] Mobilization of private financing by multilateral development banks showed a similarly skewed distribution.[39] Accordingly, and particularly for countries with special needs, such as least developed countries, more analysis is required to design financial instruments that respond to their unique situations. Both broader access to blended finance and the capacity to manage it for the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are critical to utilizing the potential of blended financing instruments.

48. Sequenced, coordinated and country-context-specific responses are critical to assisting least developed countries, small island developing States and other countries

[36] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Baseline study on the human rights impacts and implications of mega-infrastructure investment", 6 July 2017. Available from www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Development/DFI/MappingStudyontheHRRiskImplications_MegaInfrastructureInvestment.pdf.

[37] OECD, *Making Blended Finance Work for the Sustainable Development Goals* (Paris, 2018). Available from http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264288768-en. The report discusses blended finance as it relates to Goals 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13 and 17.

[38] Julia Benn, Cécile Sangaré and Tomaš Hos, "Amounts mobilised from the private sector by official development finance interventions", OECD Development Cooperation Working Paper, No. 36 (Paris, OECD, 2017). Available from https://live.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/8135abdc-en.pdf?expires=1522267389&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=9C038195E25985C2C25039C17BE4E8FF.

[39] *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects — Report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development 2017* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.17.I.5).

with special needs with expanding investment in sustainable development.[40] Promoting public-private partnerships or investment agreements without a solid legal, regulatory framework and transparent fiscal accounting poses risks, including the prioritization of the interests of investors over the populations involved, increased costs and reduced coverage. As an intermediate step, development cooperation should assist countries in building an enabling investment climate that includes an effective legal and regulatory framework, transparency and a stable, effective policy environment. Differentiated efforts would be needed to cater to the widely different needs of the various private sector actors, including micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises. To that end, the Programme for Country Partnership developed by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization assists countries in identifying opportunities and bottlenecks with regard to advancing inclusive and sustainable industrial development. Strengthening fundamentals will help attract development finance, combat illicit financial flows and create opportunities to develop local technologies and domestic capacities. That in turn creates policy space, including with regard to the ways economic gains are distributed. Once markets have matured, development partners can gradually shift towards more direct support of private projects and programmes.

49. The relationship and interoperability of different emerging principles for blended finance and public-private partnerships needs to be clarified. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda provides overarching principles for blended finance and public-private partnerships. Since its adoption, several sets of principles have been agreed on blended finance, such as the principles for blended finance of the Development Assistance Committee of OECD and the Group of 20 principles for multilateral development banks on crowding in private sector finance. In 2017, a working group of development finance institutions and development banks updated principles and guidance for providing blended concessional finance. At present, it is not well understood how the different principles relate to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda principles for blended finance, to basic principles of effective development cooperation or to the commitment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind. The 2018 report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development recommended that the Development Cooperation Forum or the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up should serve as a universal platform to discuss the coordination and interoperability of the different principles.

50. The participation, transparency and accountability of key stakeholders and beneficiaries in all phases of programmes and projects needs to be strengthened, and grievance mechanisms should be put in place or strengthened. Quality public consultation throughout the programme/project cycle can provide a more nuanced understanding of the development impact of blended finance. Appropriate cost-benefit analysis and feasibility studies can enable upfront efforts to address or avoid possible negative outcomes.[41] They should assess the different needs and the multiple and intersecting disparities affecting women and girls, indigenous peoples, the young as well as the elderly, persons with disabilities, minorities, migrants and other poor, marginalized or vulnerable groups, and ensure their full participation. Ex ante assessments should be carried out and their results should be published, especially

[40] Development Initiatives, "The enabling environment for private sector development: donor spending and links to other catalytic uses of aid", discussion paper (March 2018). Available from http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/the-enabling-environment-for-private-sector-development_discussion-paper.pdf.

[41] Polly Meeks, "Mixed messages: the rhetoric and the reality of using blended finance to 'leave no-one behind'", November 2017, European Network on Debt and Development. Available from http://eurodad.org/files/pdf/1546844-mixed-messages-the-rhetoric-and-the-reality-of-using-blended-finance-to-leave-no-one-behind--1511464491.pdf.

with regard to long-term investments in infrastructure, where results are difficult to reverse. Specific mechanisms should be put in place to anticipate and effectively address grievances from stakeholders.[42]

Action points

- States have an important role in strengthening the quantity and quality of private sector engagement in development cooperation, which includes ensuring that such engagement has a sustainable development impact and contributes to serving the needs of poor and vulnerable communities.
- Development cooperation should support developing countries with regard to putting in place regulations and dedicated policies that align private sector engagement with countries' priorities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The countries that lag furthest behind have the most urgent need for capacity support as an interim step to mobilizing and making effective use of blended finance.
- Development partners should engage governments and conduct quality public consultations with domestic stakeholders during all stages of programmes and projects.
- As the use of blended financing increases, development partners should take steps to ensure that vulnerable countries do not see a fall in their overall share of international development finance and that social sectors are not underfunded. The focus on catalysing private sector projects should not divert resources from efforts to support an enabling environment for private sector engagement, especially in countries with weak capacities.
- The relationship and interoperability of the different emerging principles for blended finance and public-private partnerships needs to be clarified by a United Nations platform such as the Development Cooperation Forum.

VII. Improving development results through strengthening monitoring and review of development cooperation

51. The 2016 Development Cooperation Forum underscored the collective responsibility of all stakeholders regarding the monitoring and review of progress towards development cooperation commitments, with emphasis on mutual learning for better development results and leaving no one behind. The present section considers how different actors are engaging in those processes and presents some knowledge gaps and areas for further action.

52. To improve results, the monitoring and review process needs to continue to evolve to capture the complex, multilayered development cooperation of the Sustainable Development Goal era. To adapt to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, mutual accountability and transparency will need to extend well beyond the relationship between developing country governments and international development cooperation partners to involve a wide range of actors and stakeholders, including national, local and regional governments, multilateral organizations and development banks, the private sector, parliaments, audit institutions and civil society.

[42] IBON International, *IBON Primer on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)* (Quezon City, Philippines, 2017). Available from http://iboninternational.org/sites/ibon/files/resources/IB%20Primer%20on%20PPPs.pdf.

53. Further efforts by developing countries on that front can be guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and build on well-defined national development cooperation policies. Policies for financial commitments regarding means of implementation[43] should be closely aligned with broader domestic resource mobilization strategies, budgetary processes and data from comprehensive, timely and reliable development cooperation information systems. Sufficiently disaggregated data is needed to identify the population groups most affected by multiple and intersecting disparities and discrimination. For example, greater efforts will be needed to set measurable and relevant targets for gender and to track budget allocations and expenditures against each development cooperation intervention.

54. Challenges remain with regard to the monitoring and review of progress towards the non-financial commitments. The non-financial means of implementation commitments of the Sustainable Development Goals,[44] for example, are broad, and in some cases not easily measurable. Beyond ODA, many Goals address the creation of enabling environments. They also show clear interlinkages among some of the global targets, such as technology facilitation and capacity-building. Here also, the role of the private sector and its engagement in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development needs to be better articulated. Another challenge is ensuring the meaningful engagement of civil society in the monitoring and review processes of development cooperation as advocates, overseers, implementers and facilitators for knowledge-sharing.

55. Assessments by Southern partners of their own practices are taking shape, though further efforts are needed to improve transparency and strengthen accountability. Developing countries should define their own parameters for measuring their South-South cooperation. The demand for evidence on South-South cooperation and its impact was already pointed to in the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action.[45] The more recent consensus for assessment and evaluation as part of regular practices has become more evident in multilateral forums and through country-led initiatives. A number of governments of the South are designing their own systems to assess their development cooperation, following different paths.[46] The evaluation experiences so far have tended to emphasize processes, and cover activities and outputs rather than results and outcomes.[47] Despite the scarcity of resources to support far-reaching evaluation, development cooperation agencies in the South are elaborating their own conceptual systems and methodological toolboxes to observe the specificity of their practices. South-South cooperation principles appear as a mainstay in approaches. The principles are also reflected in the manuals for the execution of South-South and triangular cooperation. There is little movement, beyond the Ibero-American countries, towards the establishment of a shared set of

[43] See General Assembly resolution 70/1, Goals 17.2, 17.3 and 17.4 and targets 1.a, 3.c, 8.a, 10.b, 11.c, 13.a, 15.a and b.

[44] Ibid., 17.6–17.8 (technology), 17.9 (capacity-building), 17.15 (policy and institutional coherence), 17.16 and 17.17 (multi-stakeholder partnerships).

[45] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, Buenos Aires, 30 August–12 September 1978* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.78.II.A.11 and corrigendum), chap. I, recommendations 3, 4 and 5.

[46] Paulo Esteves, "How governments of the South assess the results of South-South cooperation: case studies of South-led approaches", DCF Policy Brief, No. 20 (New York, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018). See also Arab scorecard for financing for development (E/ESCWA/EDID/2017/IG.2/5(Part I)).

[47] Including the timely completion of planned activities on budget, according to the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

evaluation procedures and standards, which many governments of the South see as undesirable.[48]

56. Parliamentarians and local governments should be empowered with the necessary capacities and resources so as to be autonomous with regard to development cooperation oversight. Local governments are well positioned to assess the results of development interventions at the local level, including by facilitating dialogue with stakeholders to scrutinize the effectiveness of service delivery. One example is Zambia, where the constitution has been amended to provide its parliament with a budget office and the power to oversee international development cooperation agreements before their ratification.[49] However, according to the survey exercise conducted by the Forum in 2018, current reports from countries show that only around half of respondents (21 of the 39 that have national development cooperation policies) have enabled their parliaments with that oversight role.

57. Systems and processes for the monitoring and review of development cooperation at all levels should be linked in more cohesive and coherent ways. Regional monitoring mechanisms, such as the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development and the African Peer Review Mechanism, can play a strengthened role. They can help connect efforts at the national and global levels to facilitate peer learning and provide supplementary data on the monitoring and review of progress towards development cooperation commitments.

58. The principles of effective development cooperation are driving the repositioning of the United Nations development system to better support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Secretary-General has put the effectiveness of the system's development cooperation at the centre of his proposals on repositioning the United Nations system to better respond to the 2030 Agenda, with emphasis on reinforcing national ownership, developing country-contextual responses and ensuring the effective delivery of development results on the ground.

Action points

- To improve results, the monitoring and review process needs to continue to evolve to capture the complex, multilayered development cooperation of the Sustainable Development Goal era. Mutual accountability and transparency need to extend beyond the relationship between developing country governments and international development cooperation partners to involve a wide range of actors, stakeholders and beneficiaries. Challenges remain with regard to the monitoring and review of progress towards non-financial commitments.
- It is important that Southern partners develop country-led systems to evaluate and assess the quality and impact of South-South and triangular cooperation programmes at various levels; and improve data collection, methodologies and statistics, bearing in mind the principles and characteristics of South-South cooperation.

[48] BRICS Policy Centre, "Paths for developing South-South cooperation monitoring and evaluation systems" (2017). Available from http://bricspolicycenter.org/homolog/uploads/trabalhos/7248/doc/1260703138.pdf. See also United Nations, "South-South and triangular cooperation for achieving the 2030 Agenda".

[49] United Nations, "The role of parliamentarians and public in strengthening accountability in development cooperation: key steps to move forward", official summary of Development Cooperation Forum side event, Nairobi, 30 November 2016. Available from www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2016doc/summary-of-side-event-at-gpedc-hlm2.pdf.

- Parliamentarians and local governments should be empowered with the necessary capacities and resources so as to be autonomous with regard to development cooperation oversight. The role of the private sector and its engagement in 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development needs to be better articulated. Another challenge that remains is ensuring the meaningful engagement of civil society in the monitoring and review processes of development cooperation as advocates, overseers, implementers and facilitators for knowledge-sharing.

- There is a need for greater accessibility to critical data on private sector engagement, which is not always available to least developed countries. Development cooperation can support efforts to engage the private sector in co-designing, implementing and assessing the outcome of projects and in strengthening the capacities of government institutions, parliamentarians and civil society to do the same.

VIII. Conclusion

59. Development cooperation is still in flux and needs to undergo fundamental change to fully realize its potential in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Development cooperation done right holds tremendous promise to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. ODA, while limited within the overall scheme of means of implementation, will remain critical. For countries with limited capacities, it will remain a distinct and vital source of development finance. For many, ODA can serve in different ways as a powerful catalyst to engage other actors, such as the private sector, in development efforts. In addition, it can help keep development cooperation firmly focused on targeting those furthest behind first.

60. Effective development cooperation can help to initiate the profound policy and programme integration required by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It can facilitate inclusive cross-sector partnerships and provide capacity support for policy coherence for sustainable development. Capacity-building in areas such as domestic resource mobilization and national data infrastructures and systems puts developing countries in the driver's seat. It empowers them to better identify and articulate their needs in national sustainable development strategies as well as in national development cooperation policies, thereby enabling development partners to better target and tailor their support.

61. Development actors have to learn more, and more swiftly, about how to operate and achieve results in an increasingly complex and diverse development cooperation system. That means embracing diversity, for instance by building more broad-based and structured South-South and triangular cooperation; expanding the space to bring the private sector into alignment with sustainable development; and strengthening the engagement of various stakeholders, including civil society, parliamentarians, mayors and local authorities. It means facilitating a more systematic exchange of knowledge. It may also mean managing diversity by agreeing on and adhering to shared targets and principles, for instance in the area of blended finance, to build synergies, while avoiding fragmentation and the duplication of efforts. The 2018 Development Cooperation Forum serves as an occasion to take stock of the progress made in adjusting development cooperation in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to identify areas where further action and research are needed to build sustainable and resilient societies.